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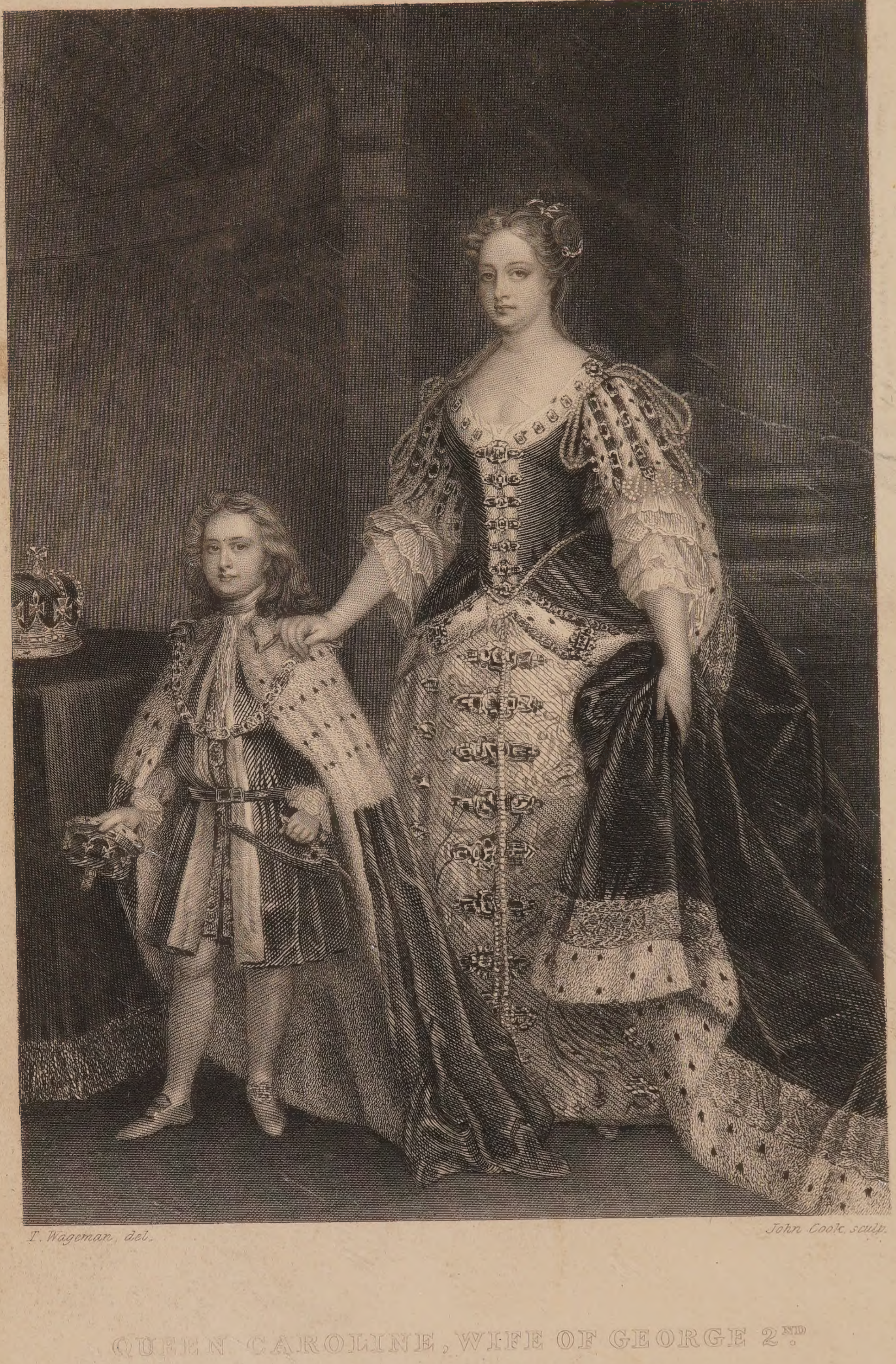

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QUEEN CAROLINE, WIFE OF GEORGE 2ND.

And Her Son William, Duke of Cumberland.

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MEMOIRS

OF

THE COURT OF ENGLAND

FROM THE

REVOLUTION IN 1688

TO THE

DEATH OF GEORGE THE SECOND.

BY JOHN HENEAGE JESSE.

AUTHOR OF

"MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF ENGLAND DURING THE REIGN OF THE STUARTS."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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MEMOIRS
OF
THE COURT OF ENGLAND.

JOHN SHEFFIELD,
DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

CHAPTER I.

The Duke's intellectual character defined. — His birth. — Early habits of study, and subsequent love of pleasure.— A volunteer in the first naval war with the Dutch in 1666.—Attempts to take his seat in the House of Lords, but objected to, on account of his being under age.—Obtains the favour of Charles the Second and his Courtiers, and befriends the poet Dryden. — Appointed Gentleman of the Bed-chamber. — Serves a campaign under Turenne.— Pays his addresses to Princess Anne. — Volunteers to command the forces despatched to the relief of Tangier.— Curious anecdote. — Sworn of the Privy Council on the accession of James the Second. — Anecdote of the Duke and King William. — The Duke's noble conduct during the London riots. — Gives in his adhesion to King William. — Created Marquis of Normanby.—Created by Queen Anne Duke of Buckinghamshire.—His vexation at the honours heaped on the Duke of Marlborough.—His infidelity and superstition.— His character as a poet.—Neglected by George the Second. —Spring Macky's character of the Duke. — His three Marriages.—Death in 1721.—His epitaph on himself.

John Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham, like many other persons of high rank who have attempted either to instruct or amuse the world, is indebted for his literary reputation, rather to his exalted position in society, than to the display of any unusual degree of talent. According to Horace Walpole, he wrote in hopes of being confounded with his predecessors in the title, the witty George Villiers; but, in the words of that sarcastic writer,—"He would more easily have been mistaken for the other Buckingham, if he had never written at all." Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham, however, appears to have had some claims to conversational wit; and, though he never attained to intellectual pre-eminence, has at least the merit of being superior to the herd of courtiers and coxcombs of the day, with whom it was his lot to associate. He exhibited, on all occasions, the highest respect for literature, both by the eagerness with which he courted literary distinction, and by the patronage which he extended to others.

The subject of the present memoir was the only son of Edmund Sheffield, second Earl of Mulgrave, by Lady Elizabeth Cranfield, daughter of Lionel, Earl of Middlesex. He was born in 1649, and on the death of his father in 1658, succeeded, at the age of nine years, to the Earldom of Mulgrave. Following the custom of young men of family, he commenced his travels on the continent at an early age. Unlike his young contemporaries, however, he denied himself to his acquaintance during several hours of each day; and, with a laudable strength of mind, not only avoided the pleasures natural to his age, but applied himself cheerfully and diligently to his studies. Afterwards, however, he became quite as much distinguished for his admiration of women and his love of pleasure, as he had formerly been for his predilection in favour of retirement and books.

The same ambition which had prompted him to seek distinction in the paths of literature, appears to have, subsequently, induced him to enlist himself as an adventurer in the field of arms. In the first naval war with the Dutch, in 1666, he went to sea as a volunteer at the age of seventeen, and had the fortune to serve in the same ship with Prince Rupert and the celebrated Duke of Albemarle, who at this period shared the command of the fleet. At the close of this service, his military ardour still raging, he obtained the command of one of the volunteer troops of horse, which, in consequence of the threatened invasion of the Dutch, were at this period quartered over the kingdom. At the next meeting of Parliament, he proposed to take his seat in the House of Lords, but Algernon, Earl of Northumberland, opposing his admission in consequence of his being under age, he was compelled for a time to forego the honour.

It was about this period, as he himself informs us, that he began to follow the allurements of pleasure with "too much eagerness." He grew into high favour with Charles the Second and his gay courtiers; became a friend of the wits;

and imbibing the spirit of the circles to which he was admitted, became a free-thinker in religion, and a prostituter of the muse. He is entitled to the merit, however, of having about the same time courted the friendship and relieved the distresses of the immortal Dryden. The great poet says, in dedicating to him his tragedy of "Aurenge-Zebe,"—"I am sure you will more easily permit me to be silent in the care you have taken of my fortune; which you have rescued, not only from the power of others, but from my worst of enemies, my own modesty and laziness."

At the breaking out of the second Dutch war in 1672, the young lord again went to sea, and behaved with so much credit at the battle of Solebay, that he, shortly afterwards, obtained the command of the "Royal Katherine," a ship which, he himself informs us, was considered the best second-rate in the service. Two years after, on the 29th of May, 1674, he was honoured with the Order of the Garter, and, about the same time, was appointed Gentleman of the Bedchamber to Charles the Second. He subsequently entered the French service. He served a campaign under the celebrated Marshal Turenne; and, returning to England in 1679, was appointed, on the disgrace of the Duke of Monmouth, Lord-Lieutenant of the county of York, and Governor of Hull.

It was at this period that Buckingham is said to have aspired to the hand of, and to have paid his addresses to, the Princess Anne, afterwards Queen of England. This circumstance is openly hinted at by Mrs. Manley in her scandalous "Memoirs," and Boyer observes, in his "History of Queen Anne," that though the Duke's addresses to her were checked as soon as discovered, yet that the Princess "ever had an esteem for him." "His presumption," says John Macky, "made him make love to the Princess Anne, (now Queen,) for which he left the kingdom; but soon after returned, and was made Lord Chamberlain by King James."

These ambitious projects are said very nearly to have cost Buckingham his life. Having volunteered to command the forces despatched for the relief of Tangier, we are assured that he was purposely sent to sea in a leaky ship, with a view of keeping him out of the way of the Princess. The narrator of this strange story informs us, that it was entirely owing to the favourable state of the weather, and to the pumps being kept constantly at work, that the Duke reached his destination in safety. He adds, moreover, that although the Duke's nice sense of honour made him persist in proceeding to sea, notwithstanding the imminent danger to which he knew he would be exposed, yet that he did his utmost to dissuade others from accompanying him. Many of his friends are said to have followed his advice. Among those, however, who had originally proposed to attend him, but who still thought it incumbent upon them to keep their word, was the Earl of Plymouth, a natural son of Charles the Second, usually styled by his contemporaries "Don Carlos." During the voyage, one of the company remarking that they had hitherto neglected to drink the King's health, notwithstanding there was one of His Majesty's sons on board,—"I know it well," said the Duke, "but we must first get out of this rotten ship, before I can make the health go merrily round." * They reached Tangier in safety, but the Moors retreating on the first approach of the English army, it was not the fault of the gallant adventurers that they gained but little honour by the expedition.

On the accession of James the Second to the throne, the Duke was almost immediately sworn of the Privy Council, and shortly afterwards was appointed Lord Chamberlain of the Household. He went all lengths with his unfortunate master, and even consented to sit on the illegal and infamous Ecclesiastical Commission. Walpole says,—"He ridiculed King James's religion, though he attended him to his chapel;" nevertheless, though he frequented, and knelt to the mass, at the King's desire, he is said by his frequent and urgent remonstrances with his royal master in private, to have latterly declined in his affection and esteem. There seems to have existed an intention, during the latter part of King James's reign, of tampering with the Duke's loyalty, and inviting him to join the cause of the Prince of Orange. King William, after his elevation to the throne, enquired of him,—"Pray, my Lord, what would you have done, if my agent had acquainted you with the whole

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* Character of the Duke of Buckingham, Works, v. ii. p.328.

business?" The honourable reply was,—"I should have discovered it to the master I then served." The King added,—"I could not have blamed you."

During that period of the Revolution of 1688, when an infuriated London mob were perpetrating the most wanton acts of mischief and pillage, the Duke distinguished himself by an act of promptitude and kindness which does him much credit. The rabble, (at the period of the King's first flight,) having razed the house of the Spanish ambassador to the ground, the Duke, conceiving, very properly, that the honour of the nation was at stake, took upon himself, notwithstanding the offence which it seemed likely to give to the popular party, to invite the ambassador to Whitehall, and to order a splendid table to be kept for him twice a day; moreover, he directed that the Yeomen of the Guard should attend constantly in the outer chamber,—a ceremony which had hitherto only been used towards the King's person. For this generous, though unauthorised stretch of authority, he informs us that he was so far from being blamed, that he was afterwards fortunate enough to receive the thanks both of King James and the Prince of Orange, for the care which he had taken of the ambassador's person and of the national honour.

It was not till the cause of King James appeared to be utterly hopeless, that the Duke offered his services to the Prince of Orange. On the first day that he paid his respects to the invader,—while waiting in the ante-chamber for his turn of admission,—Bentinck, afterwards Earl of Portland, observing him without his staff of Lord Chamberlain, observed, — "*Comment, mi Lord, vous avez quitté vôtre bâton?*"—"*Il est bien temps,*"—was the ready reply. *

A considerable time elapsed after the accession of King William, before the Duke derived any advantage from his adhesion to the government of that monarch. However, on the 10th of May, 1674, he was created Marquis of Normanby, in the county of Lincoln, and, shortly afterwards, was admitted to the Privy Council; besides having a pension conferred on him of three thousand a year.

On the accession of Queen Anne,—to whose hand he had formerly aspired,—he received the reward of his early devotion, and of his former real or pretended regard for her person. Indeed, the numerous favours which she conferred on him, gave strength to the supposition, that she was not altogether insensible to the homage which he had paid to her in her youth. Waiting on her immediately after King William died, the Queen happened to make some remark on the exceeding dulness of the day,—"Madam," he said, with the gallantry which had probably distinguished their early intercourse,—"It is the finest day I have ever seen." Before the close of the year, he not only had the Privy Seal conferred on him, but was appointed Lord Lieutenant and Custos Rotulorum of the North Riding of Yorkshire; one of the Commissioners to treat of an Union between England and Scotland; and one of the Governors of the Charter House. On the 9th of March, 1703, he was created Duke of Normanby, and, on the 23rd of the same month, Duke of Buckinghamshire.

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* Diary of the Earl of Clarendon—Clarendon and Rochester Correspondence, vol. ii. p. 231.

The favour, however, which the Whigs generally, and more especially the great Duke of Marlborough, received at the Queen's hands, were sufficient to blot out from Buckingham's mind the memory of all former benefits, and to excite his ill-humour and indignation to a very unreasonable pitch. He petulantly threw up his office of Privy Seal; and, moreover, in the Queen's hearing, is said to have muttered words which accused her of childishness, and of being easily led by those who had designs upon her. Disappointment dipped his pen in malice; and in his "Feast of the Gods," though he spared the character of the Queen, he had the bad feeling and bad taste to attack that of her consort, Prince George of Denmark, in a very unjustifiable manner.

It was during his consequent absence from Court, and cessation from State employments, that the Duke occupied himself in constructing his celebrated house in St. James's Park, on the site of which the present Buckingham Palace now stands. Near it had formerly stood old Arlington House, the residence of the famous Henry

Bennet, Earl of Arlington, of whom Buckingham purchased the property. His mode of living in his new mansion; its advantages and unusual splendour; and his personal habits; the Duke has himself described in a well-known letter, which he addressed to the Duke of Shrewsbury.*

That the Duke of Buckingham was a determined gamester is unquestionable: he has even been accused of having played unfairly; but as he appears to have been a loser by the vice, the fact may, perhaps, be doubted. Another of his vices was an inordinate love of women; his addiction to which passion, and his profligate notions in regard to the female sex, are exemplified in more than one passage in his works. The Duke was three times married; and in addition to his legal issue, was the father of at least three natural children, who survived him.†

There are many passages in the works of the Duke of Buckingham which prove him to have been a free-thinker in religion, although, on the other hand, as not unfrequently happens with sceptical persons, he seems to have been singularly open to superstition. In his poem of the "Vision," he says,—

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* Works, vol. ii. p. 253.

† After the death of Edmund Sheffield, second Duke of Buckingham, a greater part of the family estates, by the will of the first Duke, were bequeathed to Charles Herbert, his illegitimate son, by a Mrs. Lambert, on condition that he should adopt the surname of Sheffield. This person was created a baronet in 1755, and married a daughter of General Sabine, by whom he had issue two sons and a daughter.

Amazed, I waked in haste,
  All trembling at my doom;
Dreams oft repeat adventures past,
  And tell the ills to come.

The conversation of the Duke of Buckingham was not altogether without wit, of which we have already given one or two instances. We will record another, which is related by Speaker Onslow. The Duke, with his usual force and bitterness, had one day been inveighing against the Ministry in the House of Lords, when, on quitting the House, he was followed by the younger Craggs; a man, who, though of very low family, had risen to be Secretary of State, and who was known to be peculiarly sensitive of any allusion to the meanness of his birth. Craggs, addressing himself to the Duke with the familiarity which characterized him, — "Come, my Lord Duke," he said, "notwitstanding all your severity to-day, your Grace who has been so often in administration, must be aware that business must be carried on, and that the old proverb is true, that *the pot must boil.*"—"Why, yes," retorted the Duke, "it is an old and a true proverb; but, as you well know, Mr. Secretary, there is as old and as true a one, that *when the pot boils the scum is uppermost.*" A person, who dined with Craggs the same day, assured Speaker Onslow, that the effects of his discomfiture were visible the whole evening.

The following anecdote of the Duke of Buckingham, though rational in the abstract, will be regarded, perhaps, as having more of irreligion in it than wit. Burnet tells us that when, in the reign of James the Second, the priests made a particular set at the Duke, with a view of converting him to Popery,—"I am willing," he said, "to receive instruction; but as it has taken me much pains to believe in God at all, it must be an extraordinary argument that can make me believe that man is quits with God and made God."

According to Dr. Johnson, this "censure of transubstantiation" was uttered long since by Anne Askew, one of the early sufferers for the Protestant religion in the reign of Henry the Eighth.* And he expresses his surprise that Burnet, the historian of the Reformation, should have been ignorant of the fact.

Of the Duke of Buckingham's writings, whether in prose or verse, it is sufficient to say, that they have deservedly fallen into disrepute. Pope said of him,—"The Duke of Buckingham is superficial in everything; even in poetry, which was his forte." The poem on which his fame rests is the Essay on Satire—a poem, however, of which the far greater part was written by Dryden, and for which that great poet received his memorable cudgelling in Rose-Alley. According to Dean Lockier, the Duke merely made a few alterations in the poem, and these were, generally speaking, for the worse. And yet the Duke had the impudence to publish the Satire as his own.*

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* Anne Askew, after undergoing the terrible agonies of the rack, was burnt to death on the 16th of July, 1546, about the twenty-fifth year of her age. The remarkable "censure of transubstantiation" referred to by Dr. Johnson, was uttered by her during her examination before the Privy Council, in reply to some foolish interrogatories put to her by Sir Martin Bowes, the Lord Mayor. The following passage in Strype's Memorials, which was unquestionably in Dr. Johnson's mind, is too remarkable to be omitted:—"Sir Martin Bowes, sitting with the Council, as most meet for his wisdom, and seeing her stand upon life and death,—'I pray you,' quoth he, 'my lords, give me leave to talk with this woman.' Leave was granted. 'Thou foolish woman, sayest thou, that the priests cannot make the body of Christ?' Anne Askew,—'*I say so, my lord, for I have read that God made man, but that man can make*

On the change of ministry in 1710, the Duke of Buckingham once more came into office with the Tories. The Queen offered him the appointment of Lord Chancellor, which he refused; the year following, however, he accepted the office

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God I never yet read, nor I suppose ever shall read it.' Lord Mayor.—'No, thou foolish woman! after the words of consecration, is it not the Lord's body?' Anne Askew.—'It is but consecrated bread, or sacramental bread.' Lord Mayor.—'What if a mouse eat it after consecration? What shall become of the mouse? What sayest thou, thou foolish woman?' Anne Askew.—'What shall become of her say you, my Lord?' Lord Mayor.—'I say, that that mouse is damned.' Anne Askew.—'Alack, poor mouse!' By this time my Lords heard enough of my Lord Mayor's divinity; and perceiving that some could not keep in their laughing, proceeded to the butchery and slaughter that they intended afore they came thither."—*Strype's Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 387. There is also an interesting account of Anne Askew in Ballard's Memoirs of Celebrated Women, p. 62, et sequen.

* Spence's Anecdotes of Man and Books, p. 128.

of Lord Steward of the Household, and, shortly afterwards, was appointed President of the Council. On the accession of George the Second, his talents meeting with no encouragement from that monarch, he continued constantly opposed to the Court. In consequence of this neglect, he appears to have transferred his homage from the palace to the muses, and in the next few years produced his tragedies of "Julius Cæsar," and "Marcus Brutus," a class of literary composition for which he was as little qualified as he was to be a minister of state. For the latter play, Pope composed two chorusses, of which Warburton says, they only made the meanness of the piece the more conspicuous.

Spring Macky says of the Duke of Buckingham,—"He is a nobleman of learning and good natural parts, but of no principles. Violent for the High Church, yet seldom goes to it; very proud, insolent, and covetous, and takes all advantages. In paying his debts, unwilling; and is neither esteemed nor beloved; for notwithstanding his great interest at the court of Queen Anne, it is certain that he hath none in either house of Parliament, or in the country." It has been said that this character is too severe; but as far as posterity has the means of judging, we can only come to the conclusion, that he was characterized by many vices, and, apparently, by scarcely a single virtue. The best that can he said of him is, that he was a brave man, and an agreeable companion. His laugh is described as having been the pleasantest in the world; and though his temper was passionate, his disposition is said to have been a forgiving one.

The Duke, as we have already mentioned, was three times married: his choice fell, on each occasion, on a widow. His first wife was Ursula, daughter of Colonel Stawel, and widow of Edward, first Earl of Conway, by whom he had no issue. He married secondly, Catherine, daughter of Fulke Greville, fifth Lord Brooke, and widow of Baptist Noel, second Earl of Gainsborough, who also died without issue; and thirdly, Catherine Darnley, a natural daughter of James the Second, and widow of James, Earl of Anglesey, an extraordinary woman, whose eccentricities will form the subject of our next memoir.

By his third wife, the Duke was the father of four children, (three sons and one daughter,) of whom two died in their infancy, and only one, Edmund, second Duke of Buckingham, survived him. The Duke has bequeathed us some verses, on the death of his eldest son, Robert, which show that he deeply lamented his loss, but which possess more pathos than poetry, and very little of either one or the other. The Duke speaks of his offspring, as:—

A child, of whom kind Heaven
  Not only hope bestows,
But has already given
  Him all our hopes propose.

And he concludes his wretched effusion :—

> But why so much digression,
> This fatal loss to show ?
> Alas ! there's no expression
> Can tell a parent's woe !

The Duke himself expired, 24th February, 1721, at the age of seventy-one. His corpse lay in state in great magnificence at Buckingham House, whence it was transferred to Westminster Abbey, and interred with much pomp in Henry the Seventh's chapel. By his will the sum of five hundred pounds was to be expended on his monument, on which was to be inscribed the following remarkable epitaph, written by himself :—

> Dubius sed non improbus vixi,
> Incertus morior sed inturbatus,
> Humanum est nescire et errare,
> *Christum adveneror*, Deo confido
> Omnipotenti, benevolentissimo ;
> Ens Entium misere mihi.

By order of Bishop Atterbury, then Dean of Westminster, the words *Christum adveneror* were omitted, it being supposed that they were intended to derogate from the Divine Nature of our Saviour. If it were really necessary, however, to make an exception at all, an objection might just as well have been raised to the commencing couplet, which is quite as offensive as the words that were omitted.

The Duke, as has been already mentioned, was succeeded in his titles by his only surviving son, Edmund, the second and last Duke of Buckingham of his name. This young man, after a short life of great promise, died at Rome, on the 30th of October, 1735. His remains having been brought to England, were interred near those of his father in Henry the Seventh's chapel, where a curious effigy of him in wax still points out the spot where he lies. Pope also wrote his epitaph, in verses which are sufficiently well known, but which would be considered unworthy of a less gifted genius than himself.

CATHERINE DARNLEY,

DUCHESS OF BUCKINGHAM.

CHAPTER I.

Character of the Duchess written by herself—Her marriage in 1699 to James Annesley, third Earl of Anglesea—Second marriage to Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham and separation from him by act of parliament—Her daughter by the Duke married to William Phipps, Esq., ancestor of the present Marquis of Normanby—Singular anecdote of the Duchess's mother, Lady Dorchester, mistress of James the Second—The Duchess's zeal in the cause of the Pretender—Anecdote of her related by Horace Walpole—Anecdote of Pulteney, Earl of Bath—The Duchess's efforts to interest Sir Robert Walpole in the cause of the Stuarts—Her correspondence with him — Singular interview with Lord Hervey—Her love of pomp and display—Extract from Horace Walpole's letter to Sir Horace Mann—The Duchess's flattering character of herself—Her death in 1743.

There is extant a "Character," of this extraordinary woman, teeming with fulsome compliments and unblushing encomiums, which, there is every reason to believe, was the production of her own pen. After her death, an attempt was made to father it on Pope; but not only does Bishop Warburton positively deny that it was written by the poet, but Pope himself, in one of his letters, throws some important light on this literary curiosity. In a letter to James Moyser, Esq., dated 11th July, 1743, he writes, "There was a character written of her Grace, by herself, with what help I know not, but she showed it to me in her blots, and pressed me by all the abjurations of friendship to give her my sincere opinion of it. I acted honourably and did so. She seemed to take it patiently, and, upon many exceptions which I made, engaged me to take the whole, and select out of it just as much as I judged might stand, and return her the copy. I did so. Immediately she picked a quarrel with me, and we never saw each other in five or six years. In the meantime, she showed this 'Character,' (as much as was extracted of it in my handwriting,) as a composition of my own in her praise, and, very probably, it is now in the hands of Lord Hervey." Thus much it was necessary to premise; first, because the performance was an extraordinary one, and, secondly, because we may more than once have occasion to refer to it in the present memoir.

Catherine Darnley was the illegitimate daughter of James the Second, by Catherine Sedley, Countess of Dorchester, the too celebrated offspring of Sir Charles Sedley, the poet and the wit. James conferred on his daughter the surname of Darnley, and married her, at an early age, on the 28th of October, 1699, to James Annesley, third Earl of Anglesey. With this nobleman she lived on the worst terms. In her "Character" it is said, "She was married first to James, Earl of Anglesey, and secondly to John Sheffield, Duke of Bucks and Normanby; with the former, she exercised the virtues of patience and suffering, as long as there was any hopes of doing good by either; with the latter, all other conjugal virtues." Their union was of very short duration, for the Earl's ill-treatment of her, exceeding all bounds of endurance, they were separated by Act of Parliament, on the ground of "cruel and causeless ill-usage" on the part of the husband. The only issue of this ill-sorted marriage was a daughter, Catherine, married to William Phipps, Esq., from which union the present Marquis of Normanby is descended.

The Earl of Anglesey died on the 18th of January, 1702, and, about three years afterwards, his widow accepted the hand of John Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham, for whose talents she professed the highest admiration, and whose happiness, she informs us, it was the sole object of her existence to promote. The Duke, on his part, repaid her affection with far more kindness and respect than he seems to have shown towards either of his former wives. "Whenever she was ill," we are told, "or in danger, (which generally happened when she was with child, or at her lying-in,) he showed all possible marks of concern; and when there was more than ordinary danger, his servants often found him on his knees at prayers; and on those occasions he has made vows, in case she recovered, to give, in charities, sometimes two hundred, sometimes three hundred pounds at a time, which he performed punctually." The Duke himself alludes to the care which he took of his wife during her lying-in, or, as he expresses it, during the "mysteries of Lucina."*

The Duchess was ridiculously proud of her royal birth, but if we are to believe her mother, who was, unquestionably, the best judge in the matter, there existed some doubt whether in fact she were really the daughter of King James. Her mother is reported to have one day said to her,—"You need not be so vain, daughter; you are not the King's daughter, but Colonel Graham's."† This person was a fashionable lounger at the Courts of Charles and James, and as Lady Dorchester was generally believed to have conferred her favours on him, there seems to have been something more in the speech than a mere taunt. Graham was himself willing to have the story believed. The Duchess of Buckingham, and Graham's legitimate daughter, the Countess of Berkshire, were thought to bear a strong resemblance to each other:—"Well, well," said Graham, "kings are all-powerful, and one must not complain; but certainly the same man was the father of those two women."

The Duchess was, of course, the person least likely to place any faith in these surmises, and, moreover, by the enthusiasm which she exhibited in the cause of her half-brother, the Pretender, and by the exertions which she made to restore the House of Stuart, proved how firmly she was convinced of her own affinity to the blood-royal. Dr. King informs us, that in her zeal for the exiled family, she paid more than one visit to Versailles with the singular object of inducing Cardinal Fleury to embark in the same cause.* We learn also from Horace Walpole, that she paid occasional visits to the Pretender at Rome; and it appears by the Orford and Walpole Papers, that, when at Paris, she was in the habit of having frequent interviews with Bishop Atterbury in the Bois de Boulogne; ostensibly, with the view of obtaining his advice in regard to the education of her son, but in reality, to concert intrigues in favour of the Stuarts. It is even affirmed to have been owing to the arguments which she used with the Pretender, on a subsequent visit to Rome, that he was induced to remove his agents, Hay and Murray, and to invest Atterbury with the principal management of his affairs at the Court of France.†

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* Letter to the Duke of Shrewsbury, Works, vol. ii. p. 261.

† A short time before her death, the Duchess expressed an intention of being buried near her father at Paris. George Selwyn, alluding to her being the supposed daughter of Colonel Graham, remarked,—"She need not go out of England to accomplish that."

Dr. King, alluding to the visits which the Duchess paid to Cardinal Fleury at Versailles, observes,—"She got nothing from the Cardinal but compliments and civil excuses; and was laughed at by both Courts for her pompous manner of travelling, in which she affected the state of a sovereign prince." Meanness, it has been said, is not always incompatible with magnificence, and, if we may rely on the following anecdote, the conduct of the Duchess of Buckingham affords sufficient evidence of the truth of the axiom. Horace Walpole, in allusion to her frequent visits to the continent, observes, — "She always stopped at Paris, visited the church where lay the unburied body of James, and wept over it. A poor Benedictine of the convent, observing her filial piety, took notice to her Grace that the velvet pall that covered the coffin was become thread-bare,—and so it remained."*

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* Dr. King's Anecdotes of his Own Time, p. 38.

† Coxe's Life of Sir Robert Walpole, vol. i. p. 173.

Previous to one of her journeys to Rome, dreading the consequences which would follow a discovery of her political intrigues, she is said to have caused a deed to be drawn up, making over the title to her estate to the celebrated William Pulteney, afterwards Earl of Bath. On her return to England, ascertaining there was little likelihood of her being molested by the government, she applied to Pulteney for the restoration of this important document. To her dismay, he informed her it could nowhere be found. The Duchess naturally became importunate for its restoration; but Pulteney still persisting in his inability to produce it, the probability seems to have been that she would never have received justice at his hands, had not Lord Mansfield told him plainly that unless he satisfied the Duchess he could never show his face again. On this, Lord Bath is said to have reluctantly signed a release to her of her estate. *

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* Walpole's Reminiscences, p. 71.

A favourite and very ridiculous project of the Duchess of Buckingham was to entice the prime minister, Sir Robert Walpole, to join with her in effecting the restoration of the Stuarts. She proceeded, indeed, to such lengths in the prosecution of this extraordinary scheme, as actually to make Sir Robert an offer of her hand on condition that he should forward her views. The honour was politely declined by the minister. The Duchess, however, was so far from being offended by his want of gallantry, that she, shortly afterwards, appointed him one of the executors of her will. † We have on record another instance of her offering the minister a matrimonial bait, with the object of purchasing his adherence to the exiled family. The Duchess, aware of Sir Robert's extreme partiality for his daughter, afterwards Lady Churchill, enquired significantly of him if he remembered what had not been thought too great a reward for Lord Clarendon for restoring the royal family. Sir Robert affected not to understand her.—" Was not he allowed," she said, " to match his daughter to the Duke of York?" Sir Robert, we are told, merely smiled, and quitted the apartment.

There is extant a brief but curious correspondence which passed between the Duchess and Sir Robert, in connexion with her Jacobite intrigues.

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* Walpole's Reminiscences, p. 72.

† King's Anecdotes of his Own Time, p. 38.

The Duchess, it appears, on the occasion of one of her treasonable visits to the continent, had quitted England without obtaining the then requisite permission from the sovereign, and, accordingly, we find her writing to the minister from Boulogne, preferring her best excuses for the omission. "I know," she writes, "there is a usual form, as I take it only to be esteemed, of any peer's asking permission of the King (or Queen in the present circumstance) to go out of the kingdom, but even that ceremony I thought reached not to women, whose being in or out of their country seemed never to be of the least consequence." In the same letter, alluding to her well-known intrigues for the exiled family, she speaks of them as "nonsensical stories," which it makes her "almost laugh to hear." No one, however, knew better than Sir Robert that these stories were but too true.

Sir Robert Walpole, indeed, throughout his long administration, appears to have been perfectly well acquainted with all the Quixotic proceedings of the Duchess of Buckingham. His informant was Colonel Cecil, an agent of the Pretender, who, although a man of honour, was a weak and illiterate person, and unconsciously suffered himself to become a mere dupe in the hands of the minister. Fully persuaded that it was Sir Robert's intention to restore the House of Stuart, he suffered his secrets to be elicited from him, and was, in fact, a convenient tool of the English government, while he imagined himself to be performing the most valuable services for his unfortunate master. It may be remarked, that during the administration of Sir Robert Walpole, not a plot appears to have been hatched either at the Chevalier's Court, or among the Jacobites in England, of which that clear-sighted minister was not early informed, and thus was enabled to defeat them without clamour or expense.

Among other frivolities which distinguished the character of the Duchess of Buckingham, it was her custom, on the anniversary of the execution of her presumed grandfather, Charles the First, to hold a solemn fast-day, at Buckingham House. It was on one of these occasions that she received, in mournful state, and under peculiar circumstances, the celebrated John, Lord Hervey.

Ostensibly, her object in requiring Lord Hervey's attendance was to negotiate a marriage between his eldest daughter and her own grandson, Constantine, afterwards the first Lord Mulgrave: in reality, however, her motive appears to have been to convert Lord Hervey to her own political way of thinking, and by a theatrical display of mournful grandeur, to impress him with a favourable notion of the importance of the designs which she had in hand. Accordingly, when Lord Hervey entered the great drawing-room at Buckingham House, he found the Duchess seated in a chair of state in the deepest mourning, surrounded by her women as black and dismal-looking as herself. Of the result of the interview we have no record. The marriage, indeed, subsequently took place; but as Lord Hervey continued stedfast in his political opinions, the parade and trappings of the fantastic Duchess seem to have failed in their intended effect. *

Ridiculous as appears to have been the ceremony to which we have just referred, it was not altogether inconsistent with the manners and customs of the period. It may be remarked, that as late as the reign of George the First, it was usual, on the death of a husband, for a lady of any consequence to receive company in solemn state. The apartments which she occupied, as well as the stair-case by which her guests ascended, were hung with black. The lady herself, shrouded with black crape, sat upright in bed under a canopy of the same sable hue; the apartment was lighted by a single taper; and, if the deceased happened to have left children, they were arranged, like the figures on an ancient monument, at the foot of the bed. No word was spoken, and the guests, after silently making their obeisance to the mourner, retired with the solemnity with which they came.

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* Horace Walpole writes to Sir Horace Mann, March 3, 1743; "Lord Hervey has entertained the town with another piece of wisdom: on Sunday it was declared that he had married his eldest daughter the night before to a Mr. Phipps, grandson of the Duchess of Buckingham. They sent for the boy but the day before from Oxford, and bedded them at a day's notice. But after all this mystery, it does not turn out that there is anything great in this match, but the greatness of the secret. Poor Hervey, the brother, is in fear and trembling, for he apprehends being ravished to bed to some fortune or other with as little ceremony."—*Walpole's Letters,* vol. i. p. 263.

A love of display,—originating apparently in the notion that it rendered her connexion with royalty more evident, was a predominant feature in the character of the Duchess. Among other evidences which she gave of this weakness may be mentioned the princely magnificence with which she travelled when abroad, and the pomp with which she buried her husband and her son. When the remains of the latter were brought from Rome to be interred in Westminster Abbey, she wrote to the Duchess of Marlborough, requesting the loan of the triumphal car which had carried the body of the great Duke to the grave. "It carried my Lord Marlborough," was the caustic reply, "and shall never be used by anybody else."—"I have consulted the undertaker," was the retort of the other Duchess, "and he tells me I can have a finer for twenty pounds." She herself dressed up a wax figure of her son, (which may still be seen in a glass case in Westminster Abbey,) and carefully superintended the ceremony of his lying in state. To her more intimate friends she sent word, that, for their better convenience, she was willing to introduce them to the show by a private door.

Horace Walpole, in a letter to Sir Horace Mann, dated 24th December, 1741, relates an amusing anecdote of the Duchess: — "The Duchess of Buckingham," he says, "who is more mad with pride than any mercer's wife in Bedlam, came the other night to the opera *en princesse*, literally in robes, red velvet, and ermine.

I must tell you a story of her. Last week she sent for Cori,* to pay him for her opera ticket; he was not at home, but went in an hour afterwards. She said, did he treat her like a tradeswoman? She would teach him to respect women of her birth; said he was in league with Mr. Sheffield† to abuse her, and bade him come the next morning at nine. He came, and she made him wait till eight at night, only sending him an omelet and a bottle of wine. As it was Friday, and he a catholic, she supposed he did not eat meat. At last she received him in all the form of a princess giving audience to an ambassador. 'Now,' she said, 'she had punished him.'" It may be mentioned that, during her several visits to Rome, the Duchess was in the habit of having her opera box decorated in a similar manner to those set apart for crowned heads. When in France, too, she refused to pay her respects at Versailles, on the ground that the French Court refused her the rank of a princess of the blood.

The anecdotes which we have recorded of the Duchess of Buckingham render it unnecessary to offer any remarks on her character; yet the portrait which she has drawn of herself is too striking an exemplification of human vanity to be altogether omitted. "Her heart was as compassionate as it was great; her affections warm, even to solicitude; her friendship not violent or jealous, but rational and persevering; her gratitude equal and constant to the living,—to the dead, boundless and heroical. As her thoughts were her own, so were her words, and she was as sincere in uttering her judgment, as she was impartial in forming it. She was a safe companion; many were served, none ever suffered by her acquaintance. Inoffensive when provoked, when unprovoked not stupid; but the moment her enemy ceased to be hurtful she could cease to act as an enemy, and, indeed, when forced to be so, the more a finished one for having been long a-making, and her proceeding with ill people was more in a calm and steady course, like justice, than in quick and passionate onsets, like revenge. As for those of whom she only thought ill, she considered them not so much as once to wish them ill; of such her contempt was great enough to put a stop to all other passions that could hurt them. Her love and aversion, her gratitude and resentment, her esteem and neglect, were equally open and strong, and alterable only from the alterations of the persons who created them. Her mind was too noble to be insincere, and her heart too honest to stand in need of it; so that she never found cause to repent her conduct either to a friend or an enemy."

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* Angelo Maria Cori, prompter to the opera.

† Natural son of her late husband, with whom she was at law and on bad terms.

Of her person it is said in the same "Character," "The nicest eye could find no fault in the outward lineaments of her face, or proportion of her body. It was such as pleased wherever she had a desire it should; yet she never envied that of any other which might better please in general." Her beauty was probably always of the scornful kind. Lord Lansdowne writes, in his "Progress of Beauty,"—

Soft and delicious as a southern sky,
Are Dashwood's smiles;—when Darnley frowns we die.

The Duchess appears to have preserved her beauty to a late period. Baron de Bothmar, in a letter dated the 13th of August, 1714, alluding to the Duke of Buckingham having applied for the appointment of Lady of the Bedchamber for his eccentric wife, writes to his correspondent, M. Bernsdorff, "She is handsome, and appears to me fit for such a place; but she could not obtain it from the late queen, although she was her natural sister. I don't know if it was for that reason she did not choose to have her so near her, but preferred rather to give her a pension."*

The Duchess of Buckingham died at the age of sixty-two, 13th March, 1743. Walpole writes to Sir Horace Mann, the day following her death:—"Princess Buckingham is dead or dying: she has sent for Mr. Anstis, and settled the ceremonial of her burial. On Saturday she was so ill that she feared dying before the pomp was come home. She said, 'Why don't they send the canopy for me to see? let them send it though all the tassels are not finished.' But yesterday was the greatest stroke of all. She made her *ladies* vow to her, that if she should lie senseless, they would not sit down in the room before she was dead." By her own direction she was buried with great pomp in Henry the Seventh's chapel, where there was formerly a waxen figure of her, adorned with jewels, and, in the same case, another figure of her daughter, Lady Sophia Katharina Sheffield, standing by her side. The figure of the Duchess had been prepared in her lifetime by her own hands.

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* Macpherson's Orig. Papers. vol. ii. p. 642.

ROBERT HARLEY,

EARL OF OXFORD.

CHAPTER I.

Ancestors of Robert Harley.—His birth.—Offers his services to the Prince of Orange at the Revolution.—Is coldly received by him.—Elected Speaker of the House of Commons.—Appointed Secretary of State.—Procures the Secretaryship at War for Henry St. John.—His intrigues with Mrs. Masham.—His efforts to insinuate himself into her confidence by promoting her union with Mr. Masham.—Jealousy of the Duchess of Marlborough.— Harley's influence over Queen Anne.—His intrigues against the Duke of Marlborough, and Godolphin.—The Queen attends a Privy Council in person. —Harley dismissed from his office, through the influence of the Whig party. — The Queen's increasing dislike of the Whigs.—Harley's interested patronage of literary men.—The Duke of Shrewsbury persuaded to league himself with the Tories.—Ultimate overthrow of the Whig party.—Attempt on Harley's life by the Marquis de Guiscard. — Warrant issued for his arrest.—Brought before the Privy Council.— He endeavours to revenge himself on St. John.—Failing in that, he stabs Harley with a penknife during his examination before the Council. —And dies a few days afterwards in Newgate.

Robert Harley, the celebrated minister, was the representative of an ancient family, who held the lordship of Harley, in Shropshire, and distinguished themselves by their loyalty and valour, previous to the Norman conquest. The father of the statesman was Sir Edward Harley, a staunch Presbyterian, who raised a regiment during the civil troubles, and in one of the first engagements between Charles the First and the Parliament, was shot with a musket-ball, which, it is said, he carried in his body fifty-eight years. In 1647, this gentleman was one of the eleven members of the House of Commons who insisted on the expediency of coming to terms with the unfortunate King, and who were in consequence impeached by the army for high treason. He had a considerable share in effecting the restoration of Charles the Second, for which service he was rewarded with the government of Dunkirk and the order of the Bath, and was also offered a peerage, which he thought proper to refuse. During the whole of this reign, Sir Edward Harley distinguished himself as a frequent and able speaker in the House of Commons. At the Revolution of 1688, the old man joined the cause of the Prince of Orange, and marched with a troop of horse, of his own raising, to Worcester, of which place the gentlemen of the county voted him the governor. He sat in more than one Parliament during the reign of William and Mary, and died, at a very advanced age, on the 8th of December, 1700.

His eldest son, the subject of the present memoir, was born in Bow Street, Covent Garden, on the 5th of December, 1661. He was carefully instructed in the Presbyterian principles of his family, and received his education at a private school, kept by the Rev. Mr. Birch at Shilton, in Oxfordshire. At the Revolution, he engaged with ardour in the cause of the Prince of Orange; and after assisting his father in raising a troop of horse, waited personally on the Prince with a tender of his allegiance. William, however, either underrated his services, or was blind to his abilities, and, consequently, he again found himself dependent on his own genius and resources, for the advancement of his interests, and the gratification of his ambitious views.

In the first Parliament called by William and Mary, he was chosen member for Tregony, in Cornwall; and in 1690, was returned for Radnor, for which place he sat, during several successive Parliaments, till he was called up to the House of Lords. His genius seems to have been rather of that order which attracts public attention imperceptibly and by degrees, than which flashes with sudden brilliancy, and commands the observation of mankind. He was a close debater rather than a splendid orator; and was better qualified to figure as a minister of finance, than as the leader of an administration. To talents, however, of a high order, he added industry and unwearying application. He was, moreover, inordinately ambitious; and, in the gratification of that passion, was little scrupulous in availing himself of chicanery and intrigue. Neglect and disappointment are excellent incentives to ambition. "Harley," says Burnet, "not being considered at the Revolution as he thought he deserved, set himself to oppose the Court in everything, and to find fault with the whole administration." Though educated in the staunchest Whig principles, as soon as his interests required a sacrifice of those principles, he leagued himself with the Tories; and though a Presbyterian, and, indeed, suspected of a tendency to Puritanism, contrived to obtain the confidence of the high-church party, while, at the same time, he had art enough to continue in favour with the Dissenters. It was owing to this temporizing policy, and to the dexterity with which he insinuated himself into the good graces of two very opposite parties, that when King William, at the close of his reign, surrounded himself with a Tory ministry, Harley had influence enough to get himself elected Speaker of the House of Commons. This high situation he held during three successive Parliaments.

Harley seems to have been eminently well qualified to fill the office of Speaker. Both Burnet and Lockhart agree, that his natural talents were of a high order, his learning great, and his application extraordinary.

On the accession of Queen Anne, the political rise of Harley was almost as rapid as he himself could have wished. Without entering into the complicated politics of the earlier part of that reign, it may be necessary to observe, that, at this period, the Tories were nominally in power.

Some few of the Whigs, indeed, continued to fill the same situations which they held at the close of the last reign, but every office which became vacant was conferred upon the Tories. Such was the early position of that famous coalition of which Marlborough and Godolphin, who, at this period, must be regarded as Tories, were at the head, and which was generally known as the Godolphin administration.

By degrees, however, the Whigs recovered a share of their former influence; it became evident that they must speedily triumph over their enemies; and, accordingly, Marlborough and Godolphin began to think it time to sacrifice their principles to their interests; and, instead of falling with the Tories, determined, if possible, to become the leaders of the Whigs. The intentions of these two celebrated men became shortly too evident to be mistaken; and several of the high-church and ultra-Tories resigned their places in disgust. It was on the occasion of this defection in 1704, that Harley, who owed his political importance less to his genius than to his convenient connexion alike with Whigs, Tories, and Dissenters,—was raised to the office of Secretary of State. He had sufficient influence, moreover, to bring into power with him Henry St. John, afterwards the celebrated Lord Bolingbroke, who, at the same time, was appointed Secretary at War. St. John, then a very young man, with a foresight superior to that of more experienced politicians, seems to have been fully alive to the great abilities and intriguing genius of Harley, and to have attached himself to him as the person most likely to assist him in his views of personal aggrandizement. Harley, on his part, seems to have conceived a reciprocal admiration for the genius of St. John, and to have gladly availed himself of those splendid abilities, which, at this period, were in their youthful promise. Such was the nature of the early and celebrated friendship between Harley and St. John, which, it is needless to add, was, afterwards, converted into hostility as memorable.

A desire to strengthen themselves, by conciliating the Whig party, seems to have been the secret motive which induced Marlborough and Godolphin to admit Harley to a share of power. Harley, however, had now made his grand move; he was not exactly the person to remain a submissive tool in the hands of others; his intriguing and ambitious nature began to display itself;—nor was it long before his colleagues had sufficient reason to repent of their folly in admitting him to a share of the government. Almost from the moment of his accession to office, we may trace the commencement of those celebrated court intrigues, which constitute the peculiar feature of the reign of Queen Anne.

The same circumstance which elevated Harley to the pinnacle of greatness, was, eventually, the cause of his fall. This was his connexion with the celebrated Mrs. Masham, his distant relative and convenient tool. Whether that lady were ever in the state of indigence represented by her enemy, the Duchess of Marlborough—whether there was any truth in her Grace's picture of the "ragged boy,"* or that Mrs. Masham was ever a suppliant to her for pecuniary relief—cannot now, with any correctness, be ascertained. Certain it is, however, that Harley neglected his relation when his assistance might have been of service to her, and assiduously paid his court to her when her star rose in the ascendant. With his usual tact and foresight, he was one of the first to discover the secret intercourse between the Queen and Mrs. Masham, and the increasing influence exercised by the bedchamber-woman over her royal mistress. He immediately conceived the project of destroying the power of the Duke of Marlborough, by undermining the imperious Duchess in the affections of her royal mistress. With this view, he instigated Mrs. Masham to complete her triumph over her rival: he fed her with the most fulsome flattery, and assisted her on all occasions with his influence and advice.

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* Mrs. Masham's brother, afterwards General John Hill. "Jack Hill," says the Duchess, "whom the bottlemen, afterwards, called honest Jack, was a tall boy, whom I clothed, for he was all in rags, and put to school at St. Alban's to one Mr. James, who had been an usher under Dr. Busby of Westminster; and whenever I went to St. Alban's I sent for him, and was as kind to him as if he had been my own child. After he had learned what he *could* there, a vacancy happening of page of honour to the Prince of Denmark, his Highness was pleased, at my request, to take him. I afterwards got my Lord Marlborough to make him Groom of the Bedchamber to the Duke of Gloucester; and though my Lord always said, that Jack Hill was good for nothing, yet, to oblige me, he made him his aid-de-camp, and afterwards gave him a regiment."—*Conduct of the Duchess of Marlborough*, p. 159.

Harley, in pursuing his favourite schemes of personal aggrandizement, seems to have been little scrupulous in regard to the means which he resorted to, and to have been perfectly indifferent, so that he gained his ends, whether the train of his chicanery was laid in the bed-chamber or the senate. Not that he can be accused of any grave political offence, nor even of a direct falsehood; but his life was, after all, but a long *equivoque*, and his history comprises little more than a curious disentanglement of unworthy intrigue. Conscious, apparently, that he possessed neither the commanding eloquence nor the lofty genius which are usually the stepping-stones to great political power, he seems to have been determined to supply the want of high intellectual superiority, by arming himself with the weapons of artifice and dissimulation. With this object he unscrupulously availed himself of female influence and intrigue, and, to use an expression of Lord Wharton, had been long "nibbling" with the new favourite, Mrs. Masham. By degrees, he brought himself to be regarded by her as an agreeable companion; but it was evident that his object still remained unattained, unless he could contrive to insinuate himself into her confidence, and, if possible, lay her under a personal obligation to himself. The manner in which the wily statesman accomplished his purpose, not only affords remarkable evidence of his talent for intrigue, but discovers on how slender a foundation the fate of ministers and of nations occasionally rests. Mrs. Masham, who, at this period, was only Miss Abigail Hill, had become enamoured, it seems, of a Mr. Masham, one of the Queen's pages, a gentleman considerably younger than herself. In a moment of weakness, Harley wrung from her, not only this delicate secret, but the fact that her attachment was apparently not reciprocated. He immediately caused the page to be sounded by an old courtier, in whose discretion he could confide. Masham was convinced by this person that future wealth and honours would follow his marriage with the favourite; and thus, apparently with little difficulty, he was transformed from the distant friend to the eager lover. The Queen herself was made an accomplice in the affair, and, eventually, to the triumphant satisfaction of both Harley and Mrs. Masham, consented to be present at a secret marriage, which was performed in the apartments of the Queen's physician, Dr. Arbuthnot.

Hitherto, the Duchess of Marlborough had affected to regard Mrs. Masham as the mere waiting-woman. The Duchess had been the means of establishing her humble kinswoman at court; and though reports could not fail to have reached her of the Queen's increasing partiality for her future rival, she was naturally unwilling to credit the fickleness of the one, or the ingratitude of the other. When, at length, however, the story of the secret marriage was related to her, — accompanied, moreover, by convincing proofs of the Queen having transferred her affections to another,—the jealousy and indignation of the spoiled and imperious Duchess knew no bounds. It was the first time that her royal mistress had withheld her confidence from her, or, indeed, had taken any step in which the Duchess was not consulted and made a party in the affair. After this period, the latter made repeated attempts to recover her lost influence over the Queen's affections, but her expostulations led only to recrimination, and recrimination produced disgust. Gradually, she became an object of positive aversion to her royal mistress; with her influence over the Queen declined that of the Whig party; and in the end, when circumstances at length permitted the Queen to throw off the mask, and publicly discard her haughty favourite, it is needless to add, that the great Duke of Marlborough and the entire Whig party, were involved in the fall of this extraordinary woman.

In the meantime,—whether grateful to Harley for having procured her the man of her choice, or captivated by his specious arguments, and insinuating address, — Mrs. Masham seems to have been fully persuaded by the designing statesman, that their mutual interests tended towards the same goal, and by degrees to have resigned herself entirely into his hands. It was not, indeed, till a later period, when she had leagued herself with Bolingbroke, and when Bolingbroke persuaded her, in his turn, to connive at the ruin of Harley, that Mrs. Masham seems to have been fully aware of the extraordinary power with which her bed-chamber influence had invested her. Harley, however, for a time at least, was sufficiently rewarded for the assiduous court which he paid to the new favourite. By her means he was frequently admitted to the most secret interviews with the Queen; and while alone with his royal mistress in her closet, was afforded the most favourable opportunities of improving her prejudices against the Whigs, and advancing his own project of creating a Tory administration, of which he himself was to be the head.

For a considerable time, Harley, both as the minister and the closet companion, seems to have obtained an influence over the weak Queen, secondary only to that of Mrs. Masham. With an ingratiating address, an extraordinary knowledge of human nature, and, especially, an intimate acquaintance with the weaknesses of the Queen's character, it was his art to drop the discussion of politics before it became wearisome; to amuse her with the gossip and gallantries of the Court, and to pamper her with those fulsome flatteries, which seem to have been the cordial of her existence.

Harley and St. John were both finished adepts in dissimulation and intrigue; both were intimately acquainted with the machinery of Courts, and the motives of human action. The world, unquestionably, regards St. John as the more complete dissembler; for, in addition to his graceful and insinuating manners, the reputation of which has not yet faded, he figures as a brilliant writer and a still more brilliant orator; his ambition, moreover, assumed a higher and more romantic character; while the meteor-like splendour of his rise and fall, was rendered the more vivid, from his being gifted with all those shining graces of mind and person which have been rarely, if ever, surpassed.

Nevertheless, it may be questioned whether, in their mutual course of intrigue and hypocrisy, Harley was, in fact, very far behind his gifted antagonist. Both commenced life with nearly the same advantages; both were cadets of ancient families, and both had, originally, been educated in the principles of the Dissenters. Regarding them, therefore, as competitors for power and fame, and as nicely matched in worldly advantages and in the arts of intrigue, it is curious to watch the progress of their several careers. In regard to actual success, the advantage was, unquestionably, on the side of Harley; who, not only intrigued himself into the post of first minister, but maintained his position against the genius of St. John, and of his numerous enemies, positively for three years, and nominally for four. Thus Harley attained to a greatness which Bolingbroke never achieved; and success is, generally speaking, the test of superiority. That Bolingbroke was the superior genius there can be no question; but, at present, we are merely discussing the question of superiority in regard to the arts of intrigue.

The Queen, it may be remarked, especially prided herself on the countenance which she gave to religion and morality, and, consequently, it was an important point obtained by Harley, that his private character was as free from reproach, as that of St. John was tainted by libertinism and profane wit. Another advantage possessed by Harley in his intercourse with Queen Anne, was the art of accommodating his manners and conversation to the tastes and capacity of the particular person whom he addressed. With the Queen, according as the occasion suited, he could be the agreeable trifler, the delicate flatterer, or, to all appearance, the high-minded and disinterested politician. Bolingbroke says of his former associate,—"Where anything was to be got, he could wriggle himself in: when any misfortune threatened him, he could find a way to wriggle himself out." Had Bolingbroke been permitted the same favourable opportunities of ingratiating himself with the Queen which were allowed to Harley, he would never have achieved the extraordinary influence over her mind, which his rival so successfully established. With a woman, indeed, of spirit and genius, his polished address, his fine person, and insidious philosophy, would probably have engendered a reciprocity of feeling, and insured his ultimate triumph. But it was far otherwise with a homely and insipid person like

Queen Anne, whose nature it was to prefer gossip to wit, and scandal to intrigue; and who, jealous as she was of her prerogative and of the slightest approach to an undue familiarity, was, nevertheless, delighted whenever she could with decency free herself from the trammels of royalty, and associate herself with the tastes and habits of ordinary beings. In a word, she could be social with Harley where she would have been awed by St. John. The one had the art of descending to her own level; while the other, with the same impulse and desire to please, would unconsciously have discovered his intellectual superiority, and, from what we know of his character, might, occasionally, have betrayed an unlucky sneer in his flattery, and contempt in his wit.

Both Harley and St. John, it may be remarked, rested their ambitious hopes on the life of Queen Anne, without paying a proper regard to the favour of her successor: the premature death, therefore, of their royal mistress, left the one a disgraced, and the other a disappointed man. St. John, indeed, had succeeded in thrusting Harley from his pride of place, but he failed in his attempt to rise from the ruins of his rival; and, subsequently, the accession of the House of Hanover left them both powerless, and without the opportunity of again encountering each other in any political conflict. Had the Queen lived, St. John would very probably have enjoyed a brief triumph, but, after a season, it may be questioned whether the quiet and crafty hypocrisy of Harley would not have obtained a fresh victory over the towering genius and more brilliant qualities of his antagonist.

The interviews between the Queen and Harley, notwithstanding the extraordinary secrecy with which they were conducted, could not long elude the jealous vigilance of Marlborough and Godolphin. Placed, as we now are, behind the scenes, it is not a little amusing to peruse the letters addressed at this period by Harley to his colleagues, in which he professes towards them the warmest and purest feelings of fidelity and affection,* while, at the same time, he was deliberately plotting their irremediable ruin. According to the Duchess of Marlborough, Godolphin was the first to discover Harley's treachery, the Duke being "too backward" in giving credit to his ambitious designs. At length, however, Harley's delinquency became too evident to be any longer mistaken, and, accordingly, Marlborough and Godolphin severally addressed letters to the Queen, in which they intimated to her that the continuance of Harley in office must inevitably prejudice her affairs, and respectfully expressed their intention of resigning, in the event of his being retained in her confidence.

The draft of Marlborough's letter, (which is in his own hand-writing, with a trifling alteration by Godolphin,) is still preserved, and is curious as displaying the consciousness which he felt of his own services, and his thorough and undisguised detestation of Harley.

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* See the "Conduct of the Duchess of Marlborough," p. 166 *et seq.* Ed. 1744. Also Coxe's Life of the Duke of Marlborough, Somerville's Queen Anne, and the Hardwicke State Papers.

"Madam,—Since all the faithful services I have endeavoured to do you, and the unwearied pains I have taken for these ten days to satisfy and convince your Majesty's own mind, have not been able to give you any such impressions of the false and treacherous proceedings of Mr. Secretary Harley to Lord Treasurer and myself, but that your Majesty is pleased to countenance and to support him, to the ruin of your own business at home; I am very much afraid it will be attended with the sorrow and amazement of all Europe, as soon as the noise of it gets abroad. And I find myself obliged to have so much regard to my own honour and reputation, as not to be every day made a sacrifice to falsehood and treachery, but most humbly to acquaint your Majesty, that no consideration can make me any longer serve with that man. And I beseech your Majesty to look upon me, from this moment, as forced out of your service, as long as you think fit to continue him in it.

"No heart is fuller of duty to your Majesty than mine; nobody has more sincere wishes for your prosperity, nor shall more constantly pray for your Majesty's long life, and for your happiness both here and hereafter. I am always with the greatest respect, and the truest zeal for your service, &c., &c." *

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* Coxe's Life of the Duke of Marlborough, vol. ii. p. 386.

Neither the repeated threats nor the persuasions, however, resorted to by Marlborough and Godolphin, produced any effect upon the Queen's mind. She still continued to receive the visits and to listen to the specious arguments of Harley, and, accordingly, the two ministers determined to bring matters to a crisis, and with this purpose absented themselves from council. The Queen, notwithstanding that their intention of not being present had been previously communicated to her, adopted the extraordinary measure of attending the council in person. She even showed a determination to proceed to business as if nothing had happened, and Harley, as perhaps had been preconcerted between them, commenced discussing the topic on which the members of the council had met to deliberate.

The result of the partizanship displayed by the Queen, and the bold assurance exhibited by the Secretary, was very different from what they seem to have confidently anticipated. As Harley coolly proceeded with the business of the day, the members of the Council are said to have regarded each other with looks of astonishment, and murmurs were heard which gradually became more distinct. At length, the Duke of Somerset, the "proud Duke," effectually put a stop to the memorable farce:—"While the General and the Lord Treasurer," he said, "are absent, I do not see how we can proceed with the present deliberations." The remark, it was evident, conveyed the sense of the meeting, and Harley was compelled to desist in the midst of his oration. Cool and composed as he generally was, even under the most trying circumstances, he was unable to conceal his vexation; and, at the same time, the Queen, in evident agitation and alarm, retired sullenly and silently from the meeting. It was a proud, though a brief, triumph for the Whigs. The Houses of Lords and Commons unequivocally expressed their determination to support the existing ministry, and in the latter House particularly, a Bill of Supply was purposely suffered to lie idle on the table, though especially ordered for the day. The Queen thus found herself in danger of being abandoned by the Whigs, without having a party at hand sufficiently powerful to supply their places. In her dilemma, she had no course to pursue but to court the party who were notoriously the objects of her hate; Marlborough was sent for the next day, and Harley received his dismissal from her hands.

Harley, however, though thwarted, was not vanquished. "Through the whole summer after his dismission," says the Duchess of Marlborough, "the Queen continued to have secret correspondence with him. And that this might be the better managed, she stayed all the sultry season, even when the Prince* was panting for breath, in that small house she had formerly purchased at Windsor, which, though as hot as an oven, was then said to be cool, because from the park such persons as Mrs. Masham had a mind to bring to her Majesty, could be let in privately by the garden."

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* The Queen's husband, Prince George of Denmark, who was suffering from asthma.

Harley and his friends, it is said, used to brag in their cups, that while the ministers were lulled into a false confidence, they themselves were admitted to the royal closet by the back-stairs, and were engaged in assisting the Queen to plot against her responsible advisers.

The Queen, having thus condescended to become the tool of a party, Harley availed himself with so much adroitness of her deep-rooted prejudices against the Whigs, and of the woful intrigues of Mrs. Masham, that, in a short time, he was again enabled to array himself against his adversaries, with every prospect of ultimate success. Anne, at this period, had reason to be highly offended with the Whigs, in consequence of a proposition, — which, though it doubtless originated in the private malice of the Duchess of Marlborough, seems to have been seriously contemplated by the falling ministry,—that an address should be presented to the Queen by the House of Commons, recommending the removal of her favourite bedchamber-woman, Mrs. Masham, from about her person. Anne, who always required to be thoroughly provoked before she could be induced to shake off her natural timidity and indecision, was thus rendered personally and warmly interested in the success of her underhand advisers, and, as we have already seen, became a secret conspirator against her own ministers. There were other circumstances which materially assisted Harley in his views of aggrandizement. The unpopularity of a long and expensive war; the general impression that it was protracted by the Duke of Marlborough for the purpose of filling his own coffers; the excitement caused by the trial of the popular idol, Dr. Sacheverel; and the almost universal belief that the Church was in danger; had gradually alienated the affections of the people from the Whigs.

Harley, on his part, neglected no opportunity of converting passing events to his own advantage, and of throwing odium upon his adversaries. In this, his primary object, he was greatly assisted by his intercourse with literary men, and the patronage which it had long been his policy to extend to literature; circumstances which enabled him successfully to array the thunder of the press against his devoted antagonists. The pamphlets and various political papers which were published at this juncture, although many of them openly, though insidiously, attacked the darling principles of the Revolution, were, nevertheless, greedily devoured by the mass of the people, and had no slight share in effecting the fall of the great Marlborough, and the ruin of the once powerful Whig party.

Partly from the tenacity with which the Whigs clung to office, and their unwillingness to act a manly and decided part; and partly from their being successfully entangled by Harley in a web of artifice, — one of the most extraordinary ever woven by a politician, — the "Whig game," as the latter styled it, was at an end. Harley, at the same time that he was the recognized leader of the Tories, had art enough to convince more than one of the Whig party, that should their whole body desert the Queen, the religion and constitution of the country would inevitably be in danger. The Duke of Shrewsbury was easily persuaded to league himself with the Tories; and the Queen, without consulting her ministers, rewarded him with the post of Lord Chamberlain. The Earl of Sunderland, the near relation of Marlborough, was next removed; and as this affront to the great hero excited no popular commotion, more important measures were determined upon. On a sudden, Godolphin was not only deprived of his office of Lord Treasurer, but the usual command to break his staff was delivered to his porter by one of the royal livery-servants. The Queen's note in which she signified her pleasure to Godolphin that he should no longer direct her affairs, is too curious to be omitted :—

"Kensington, August 7 [1710].

"The uneasiness which you have showed for some time, has given me very much trouble, though I have borne it; and had your behaviour continued the same as it was for a few years after my coming to the Crown, I could have no dispute with myself what to do. But the many unkind returns I have received since, especially what you said to me personally before the Lords, makes it impossible for me to continue you any longer in my service; but I will give you a pension of four thousand a-year, and I desire, that instead of bringing the staff to me, you will break it, which, I believe, will be easier to us both."*

The pension promised in this letter, Anne is said to have neglected to pay; and according to an endorsement on the Queen's note, in the handwriting of the Duchess of Marlborough, Godolphin was too proud to appeal to her for the fulfilment of her promise.

Thus was the ruin consummated of one of the greatest heroes, and one of the most powerful administrations, by means of the secret influence of a bed-chamber woman, and the intriguing genius of a renegade Dissenter. Some few of the Whigs resigned their offices with decent dignity; others delayed their resignation from hopes of compromise or motives of self-interest; Halifax treated in private with Harley for his friends; the Duke of Somerset was induced to retain his post under the Tories, and the Duke of Newcastle fondly clung to his office till he was dismissed. Even Marlborough became a traitor to his friends, and continued for some time in command of the army, but it was only till he could conveniently be removed.

The result of these memorable proceedings was the elevation of Harley to the chief direction of affairs. On the 10th of August, 1710, he was appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer; St. John, at the same time, being made Joint-Secretary of State with the Earl of Dartmouth. A Tory ministry was formed without difficulty; the Parliament was dissolved, and a House of Commons returned, which was entirely devoted to the new administration.

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* Coxe's Life of the Duke of Marlborough, vol. iii. p. 291.

It was only a few months after the accession of Harley to office, that an attempt was made by the Marquis de Guiscard on his life. According to Burnet, this profligate person had originally been an abbot in France,* from which country he was compelled to absent himself on account of his "enormous crimes." He subsequently rose to the rank of colonel in the British army, and distinguished himself on several occasions by his personal gallantry; more especially at the battle of Almanza, where his regiment was almost entirely cut to pieces.

These services were fairly enough considered by the adventurer as entitling him to a pension. As long, however, as the Whigs continued in power, his known intimacy with St. John and the Tories, (who had probably made use of him in some of their underhand transactions,) procured him but little consideration. On the accession of the Tories to power, he was destined to be scarcely more successful. St. John, who had formerly selected him, on account of his social qualities and congenial habits of dissipation, to be his boon companion, had either grown ashamed of his former associate, or Guiscard had given him some cause of offence. The Queen, indeed, was inclined to recognize his claims, and ordered him a pension of £500 a-year, but by the influence of either Harley or St. John,—Guiscard himself believed the latter,—the sum was reduced to £400, which, moreover, was not permitted to be placed on the fixed establishment, and consequently was but irregularly paid.

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* He had been Abbé de Bourlie, near Cevennes.

Stung to exasperation by repeated disappointments, as well as by the neglect and contempt which he experienced from his former friends, Guiscard, (apparently aiming at the same time at revenge and advantage,) offered his services to the French government, and subsequently entered into a treasonable correspondence with that country. According to the rumours of the period, his guilt was not merely confined to treachery, but it was believed that he harboured a design against the Queen's person. This improbable fact, however, may reasonably be doubted. "If Guiscard," says Lord Dartmouth, "had any design upon the Queen, his heart failed him; for he had been with her the evening before, and nobody in the outer room but Mrs. Fielding, or within call but Mrs. Kirk, who was commonly asleep." Under what circumstances so notorious a profligate, and so dangerous an adventurer, obtained this secret and ill-advised interview with the Queen, it is now impossible to ascertain. Anne, however, informed Lord Dartmouth that Guiscard, during his interview, confined himself to "very pressing" solicitations for an increase of his pension, and to complaints of the irregularity with which it was paid.

At all events, the fact of the adventurer's treasonable correspondence with the Court of France was placed beyond the possibility of a doubt. With the cunning and experience in the arts of low intrigue of which such persons are usually masters, he adopted the precaution of addressing his communications to the French government through the circuitous route of other European countries. One of these letters, having been forwarded to a person in Portugal, fell accidentally into the hands of the British Ambassador, the Earl of Portmore, who immediately transmitted it to his own government. From this period, Guiscard was closely watched; and, shortly afterwards, a second packet falling into the hands of the English ministry, a warrant, signed by his old associate, St. John, was issued for his arrest.

The Frenchman, unconscious of the danger awaiting him, was walking in St. James's park, when he was suddenly seized and disarmed by a messenger, and carried before the council, which was sitting at Whitehall. During the first moments which followed his arrest, his self-possession is said to have entirely failed him, and he passionately implored the messenger to kill him on the spot. He soon, however, recovered his self-command; and while waiting in an ante-chamber to be summoned before the Privy Council, contrived to secrete about his person a penknife, which he found lying among some pens in an inkstand on the table.

On being brought before the council, Guiscard behaved with the utmost coolness, and stoutly and confidently denied the charges brought against him. However, when St. John put some questions to him, which clearly proved how well informed were the government in regard to his recent proceedings, and, more particularly, when Lord Harcourt showed him one of his own letters, he entirely lost his former assurance of manner, and after making a daring attempt to snatch the letter out of Lord Harcourt's hands, seems to have given himself up to despair.

Finding that the evidence against him was too clear to be controverted, and that in all probability he was fated to suffer an ignominious death, the Frenchman, with a desperate resolution, seems to have aimed at the last remaining alternative, revenge. The principal object of his hatred was, unquestionably, St. John, who he believed had not only deprived him of the free enjoyment of the pension granted him by the Queen, but who had added insult to injury; who had first courted and then contemned him; who had formerly been his boon companion and was now the imperious and unsparing inquisitor. St. John, during the examination, was, fortunately for himself, seated on the opposite side of the table, where it was impossible for the arm of the assassin to reach him. Guiscard, however, (determined, if possible, to avail himself of this last opportunity of wreaking his vengeance on the man who he believed had most injured him,) made use of some plausible arguments for inveigling him into a personal conference, urging that he had matter to communicate which should only be entrusted to St. John's private ear. This request (as Guiscard was a prisoner for high treason) was very properly refused by St. John; a circumstance to which he was apparently indebted for his life.

During his examination, Guiscard had contrived to thrust himself between the Duke of Ormond and Harley; so closely, indeed, that he might easily have drawn the sword of the former, and used it for his purposes of revenge: either, however, in the perturbation of his thoughts, the circumstance did not occur to him, or he trusted in the insignificant weapon which he had secreted about his person. Guiscard continued so pertinaciously arguing with St. John on the necessity of granting him a private interview, that Harley, wearied with his importunities, or satisfied that the object of the investigation had been sufficiently attained, rose to ring the bell, for the purpose of summoning the messengers to remove their prisoner. Guiscard, observing his object, remarked,—"*Voilà qui est dur!—pas un mot!*" At the same time he made a step towards Harley, as if he had something to whisper in his ear. From a Frenchman's gesticulations, it is not always easy to discover whether he is an enemy or a friend. In a moment Guiscard had drawn the knife from his bosom and thrust it into the breast of the minister. The blade broke at the first thrust, but the assassin, ignorant of the circumstance, continued desperately to repeat the stroke. For a moment the members of the council were stupified at the suddenness of the attack. St. John was the first to recover his self-possession, and made towards Guiscard;—" The villain," he said, drawing his sword, " has killed Mr. Harley." The council-chamber was, of course, in an uproar. Some of the members drew their rapiers, and thrust at the defenceless assassin; others defended, or fancied they defended themselves, with chairs; while Guiscard, on his part, rushed desperately against his assailants, as if desirous of meeting his death at their hands. It was not till further assistance was obtained, that the assassin was effectually secured, and conveyed to Newgate. From this period Guiscard refused all aid from medicine, and in a few days died of a mortification which ensued from one of his wounds.

CHAPTER II.

Harley's recovery from his wound.—His firmness and self-possession when anticipating death.—His popularity increased by Guiscard's attempt on his life.—Publicly congratulated by the House of Commons on his escape.—His reply.—Act of Parliament passed on the occasion.—Harley created Earl of Oxford.—Extract from Swift's journal to Stella.—Harley appointed Lord High Treasurer, and honoured with the Garter.—Lord Dartmouth's and Lockhart's opinions of Harley.—Extracts from Spence's anecdotes and Swift's correspondence.—Curious anecdotes of Harley.—Intrigues of St. John against Harley.—The latter's jealousy of his rival.—Reasons of St. John's hostility to Harley.—Mrs. Masham declares against Harley.—The Queen induced to abandon him.—Inquiry into the charges brought against him.—Letter from Harley to Swift.—Memorable interview between the Queen, Mrs. Masham, Harley, and St. John. — Indecent squabble between the parties in the royal presence.—Harley resigns the post of Lord Treasurer.—Accession of George the First.—Harley's sanguine anticipations in consequence.—His disappointment.—St. John impeached of high treason.—Harley impeached by Lord Coningsby of the same crime, and committed to the Tower.—Popular sympathy for the fallen minister.—His noble conduct under disgrace.—Attempts made by his enemies to delay his trial.—Feigned quarrel between the Houses of Lords and Commons.—Unanimous acquittal of Harley.—He retires into private life, and amuses himself by collecting the Harleian MSS., now in the British Museum.—His death.

The wound received by Harley, though a serious, was not a dangerous one. The knife, indeed, having broken in his breast, caused him severe pain; so much so, that he apprehended himself to be mortally wounded, and enquired of Bucier, the surgeon, whether his life was in very imminent danger: he did not fear death, he said, but he was desirous of settling his affairs. "This fearlessness of consequences," says Lord Dartmouth, "was visible by his countenance, which was not in the least altered." Swift styles him "the most fearless man alive;" and St. John, in a letter to his confidential agent, Drummond, observes,—"It is impossible to express to you the firmness and magnanimity which Mr. Harley showed upon this surprising occasion: I, who have always admired him, never did it so much. The suddenness of the blow, the sharpness of the wound, the confusion which followed, could neither change his countenance, nor alter his voice." The accident, however, proved eventually of great service to Harley, by adding considerably to his popularity, which had for some time been on the wane. His assassin being a Papist, he was regarded as a martyr to the Church of England; and, moreover, in consequence of the blow having been struck by a secret emissary of France, it was presumed that his zeal for the interests of his own country must have rendered him an especial object of hatred to its enemies. Thus did an accident,—a blow from a disappointed maniac, whose arm was guided by motives of mere personal revenge,—at once overthrow the schemes of Harley's enemies, and re-establish him in the fulness of his power. On such trifling circumstances often rests the stability of a popular government. A dastardly assassination, the excitement caused by a royal marriage, or a successful battle, more frequently serve as props to a falling administration, than acts which might deservedly claim for their promoters the blessings of mankind.

Harley, on recovering from his wounds, had little reason to complain of want of sympathy on the part of the world. Addresses had already been presented by both Houses of Parliament to the Queen, which, while they deprecated the late "barbarous attempt" on her servant's life, at the same time expressed their conviction that it was Harley's fidelity to Her Majesty's person, and his zeal for her service, which had drawn down upon him the hatred of all the abettors of Popery and faction. The House of Commons, especially, voted that he should be publicly congratulated on his providential escape; and, accordingly, on his return to his Parliamentary duties, after a confinement of a few weeks, from the effects of his wounds, the Speaker, in a formal speech from the chair, expressed to him the joyful satisfaction of the Commons of England at the preservation of "so valuable a life, upon which, under Her Majesty, depended the safe-guard of the religion and constitution of the country." "Sir," concluded Harley's reply,—"The undeserved favour I have received this day, is deeply imprinted in my heart; and whenever I look upon my breast, it will put me in mind of the thanks due to God; my duty to the Queen; and that debt of gratitude and service I must always owe to this honourable House, to you, Mr. Speaker, and to every particular member." In consequence of the recent outrage, an act of Parliament was passed, making it felony, without benefit of clergy, to attempt the life of a privy-councillor in the execution of his duty; a singular clause being added, which justified and indemnified such persons as had either stabbed or bruised Guiscard in the late affray.

The Queen, owing to Harley's extraordinary popularity at this period, was enabled, at the same time, to gratify his ambitious views, and her own personal regard for her minister, by advancing him to the House of Lords. Accordingly, on the 24th of May, 1711, about two months after the attempt on his life, he was created Baron Harley, of Wigmore, in Herefordshire; Earl of Oxford, and Earl of Mortimer. Swift writes to Stella on the day previous,—"Lewis whispered me that Mr. Harley's patent for Earl of Oxford was passed in Mr. Secretary St. John's office; so to-morrow, or next day, I suppose, he will be declared Earl of Oxford, and have the staff. This man is grown by persecutions, turnings-out, and stabbing. What waiting, and crowding, and bowing, will be at his levee! yet if human nature be capable of so much constancy, I should believe he will be the same man still, bating the necessary forms of grandeur he must keep up." Two days afterwards, Swift writes to the same correspondent,—"My Lord

Oxford can't yet abide to be called my Lord; and when I called him my Lord, he called me Dr. Thomas Smith, which he always does when he has a mind to teaze me. By a second hand, he proposed my being his chaplain, which I, by a second hand, excused; we had no talk of it to-day, but I will be no man's chaplain alive." On the 29th of the month, Harley was appointed Lord High Treasurer of Great Britain, and on the 26th of October, the following year, was honoured with the Garter.

Of the Earl of Oxford, as a minister and a statesman, and especially of the political events in which he was the principal actor, sufficient, perhaps, has already been said. It remains, however, for us to introduce a few remarks respecting his personal character, and his capacity to fill the high post to which cunning and intrigue, rather than individual merit, had exalted him.

The most favourable character which has been bequeathed to us of Harley, is to be found among the agreeable memoranda of his friend, Lord Dartmouth. According to that nobleman, he understood and loved the constitution of his country; was the zealous advocate of a legal, limited, and constitutional monarchy; was earnest in his contempt and dislike of "scheme-makers," and was as zealously and affectionately attached to the interests of his country as he was regardless, except where his vanity was concerned, of his own. Lord Dartmouth, however, admits that Harley's friendship was little to be trusted where it interfered with his private views, and that on such occasions he would give the preference even to an enemy.

Lockhart of Carnwarth enters more closely into Harley's character, with which he could not fail to be intimately acquainted. "His natural temper," he says, "and greatest dexterity lay rather in managing and despatching mere drudgery sort of business, and in contriving snares to catch those he had a mind to undermine, than in being the chief minister of state, and prime favourite. Besides that, he was too reserved, and admitted too few into his secret designs;* he did not show that politeness and address so necessary in one of that high station to which he was now advanced, and seemed to affect to carry his views more by his own cunning than by the influence, weight, and authority of the Crown, and by supporting and encouraging the friends thereof. From thence it came to pass that he gained few friends, and created many personal enemies. He was, indeed, very civil to all who addressed him, but he generally either spoke so low in their ear, or so mysteriously, that few knew what to make of his replies; and, it would appear, he took a secret pleasure in making people hang on and disappointing them." Harley, however, could be social and agreeable among his particular friends; he surrounded himself with men of learning and genius; he possessed wit himself; was charmed to meet with it in others; and is said to have applauded it even when exercised at his own expense. He was invariably civil to his enemies; and, when it suited his purpose, occasionally more obliging to them than to his friends. He courted, somewhat slavishly perhaps, the good opinion of men of all parties, and as evidence of his latitudinarianism, or, at all events, of his freedom from religious prejudices, maintained chaplains of several sects in his household. His great merit seems to have been his superiority to the frowns of fortune, and the equanimity which he displayed on many trying occasions. He never permitted his temper to be ruffled by either the most aggravated insult or the most unexpected misfortune; and, to judge from his countenance and the equable placidity of his manners, he appeared to be exempt from the common ills of mortality, and alike invulnerable to fear, passion, or even bodily pain. One of his principal failings was indecision: Swift, who was intimately acquainted with his character, styles him "the greatest procrastinator in the world."

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* Bolingbroke, on more than one occasion, complained bitterly of his colleague's reserve; and Lord Harcourt, though filling the high post of Lord Chancellor, used to observe that he knew as little of what was going on as if he had been Harley's groom.

Pope, who was the intimate associate of Harley, and who has eulogized him in some of his best verses, seems to have formed a far higher opinion of his friend as a philosopher than as a statesman. "Lord Oxford," he said, in conversation with Spence, "was not a very capable minister, and had a good deal of negligence into the bargain. He used to send trifling verses from Court to the Scriblerus club almost every day, and would come and talk idly with them almost every night, even when his all was at stake. That lord talked of business in so confused a manner that you did not know what he was about; and everything he went to tell you was in the epic way, for he always began in the middle." Pope, on another occasion, observed that he was "huddled in his thoughts, and obscure in his manner of delivering them."

The fact recorded by Pope, that Harley, "when his all was at stake," was in the habit of amusing himself with scribbling idle verses and gossiping with idle wits, is corroborated by several passages in the correspondence of Swift. The latter, on one occasion, describes his patron "as being as merry, and careless, and disengaged, as a young heir at one-and-twenty;" and in a letter to Stella, dated the 11th of October 1711, he writes,—"Lord Treasurer calls me now Dr. Martin, because martin* is a sort of swallow, and so is a Swift. When he and I came last Monday from Windsor, we were reading all the signs on the road. He is a pure trifler; tell the Bishop of Clogher so. I made him make two lines in verse for the Bell and Dragon; and they were rare bad ones." Swift, on another occasion, speaking conjointly of Harley and St. John, observes;—"I cannot but think they have mighty difficulties upon them, yet I always find them as easy and disengaged as schoolboys on a holiday."

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* The appellation of Martinus Scriblerus was borrowed from this pleasantry of Lord Oxford.

Of the ingenious manner in which Lord Oxford was in the habit of fighting off the importunities of those who looked up to him for advancement, more than one anecdote has been related. Lockhart of Carnwarth mentions the case of a Scotchman of the name of James Anderson, — an antiquary, and apparently a man of merit,—who had been recommended to Oxford by the Queen. Anne, it seems, had taken some pleasure in looking over his collection of seals and old charters; and on her mentioning his name to her minister as a person in whose advancement she took an interest, Harley affected to anticipate her wishes, by observing that Anderson was the man in the whole world whom he most desired to oblige. The Scotchman, however, and his curiosities seem to have been speedily forgotten, and consequently the suppliant for court favour, having anxiously expected a place for fourteen or fifteen months, again ventured to wait on the minister, and reminded him of his promise. Oxford admitted him to an interview; and not only gave him the kindest and most flattering reception, but paid him the high compliment of asking him for his picture, which it was his intention, he said, to place in his library, in a collection that he possessed of the portraits of other learned and ingenious men. The Scotchman now believed his fortune to be made in good earnest. The picture was sent, but he never received any favour more substantial, and at length desisted from further importunities in disgust. Lockhart informs us that from this period, when it was asked what place such a person was about to obtain at Court, the answer commonly was,—"A place in the Treasurer's Library."

Another anecdote, equally amusing, is recorded by the same writer. A person,—whose name Lockhart omits to mention, but whom he represents as a wit and poet,—attended one of the minister's levees, furnished with recommendatory letters from some of the most influential persons of the day. Lord Oxford's first inquiry of the candidate for Court favour was, whether he understood Spanish? The poet replied in the negative, but added that he could soon make himself master of the language; a task he speedily accomplished, upon which he again presented himself to the minister. Oxford inquiring of him whether he had completed his labours, and being answered in the affirmative,—"Well, then," he said, "you will have the pleasure of reading Don Quixote in the original language, and it's the finest book in the world." According to Pope, the unfortunate hero of the tale was Rowe, the dramatic poet. "It was Lord Oxford," he says, "who advised Mr. Rowe to learn Spanish; and after all his pains and expectation, only said,—'Then, Sir, I envy you the pleasure of reading Don Quixote in the original.' — Was not that cruel ?" Spence, who records Pope's version of the story, considers the cruelty to have been unintentional, and merely originating in the oddness of Lord Oxford's manner.

Of the circumstances which drove Harley from power, of the treachery of the Queen's minion, Mrs. Masham, and the intrigues by which St. John accomplished the downfal of his former friend, there is no necessity to introduce any further details. As long as the interests of Harley and St. John were the same, as long as they continued mutually engaged in opposition to an adverse and triumphant party, they remained the models of political friendship. But their united exertions had no sooner elevated Harley to the pinnacle of power, than the restless spirit and towering ambition of St. John induced him to plot against his colleague and his friend. He knew his talents to be superior to those of Harley ; his pride shrunk from conducting the mere subordinate details of a Secretary of State's office ; and while there existed a chance of his becoming the leader, he was naturally unwilling to play the part of an underling. Thus, partly from St. John's inordinate ambition, and partly from the effects of Harley's perpetual jealousy of his aspiring disposition, — which led him, on more than one occasion, to provoke and irritate, without effectually curbing, his refractory colleague,—we may trace the secret source of those notorious intrigues and discreditable squabbles, which distinguished the last years of the reign of Queen Anne, and embittered, if they did not hasten to a close, the life of that Princess.

We have the authority of the Earl of Oxford himself, that the seeds of dissension were sown between him and St. John as early as February 1710, when, according to the Treasurer's statement, St. John displayed an evident spirit of restlessness and opposition, and an inclination to raise a party for himself. This spirit of rivalship was still further excited between them the following year, in consequence of the attempt of Guiscard on the Treasurer's life. Though it must have been clear, both to Harley and St. John, that the attack was entirely prompted by feelings of personal revenge, yet as it was no less evident that, in the then feverish state of the public mind, a minister who had the good fortune to be marked out for destruction by a Papist and an accredited agent of the French government, must for a time become the popular idol, both parties were naturally desirous of being regarded as the Frenchman's intended victim; and, indeed, courted the distinction with feelings of almost puerile jealousy.

There were other grievances which especially rankled in the mind of St. John. Harley, when forced by circumstances to raise his colleague to the peerage, had displayed an unworthy jealousy of exalting him to the same rank with himself, and invidiously conferred on him the Viscountcy, instead of the Earldom, of Bolingbroke, which latter title might almost be considered as the property of the St. Johns, having recently expired in the person of Paulet St. John, the third Earl. *

Another cause of annoyance to St. John was, the circumstance of Harley refusing to confer on him the order of the Garter, on several ribands becoming vacant in 1712, with one of which Harley chose to decorate himself. It is, indeed, from this period, that we more clearly trace St. John's thorough dislike to his former friend. He became a constant attendant at Mrs. Masham's evening assemblies; he aided her, in spite of the determined opposition of Oxford, to realize a large sum of money at the public expense; and from being regarded by that lady and her royal mistress as a firebrand and a debauchee, he contrived to insinuate himself into the highest favour at court: by degrees he won over Lord Harcourt, Sir William Wyndham, and some of the most influential men of the Tory party, to

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* This invidious and unwise distinction was unquestionably deeply felt by St. John. In a letter, written in the year of his elevation, he writes;—" To make me a peer was no great compliment, when so many others were forced to be made, to gain a strength in Parliament; and since the Queen wanted me below stairs in the last session, she could do no less than make me a Viscount, or I must have come in the rear of several whom I was not born to follow. I own to you, that I felt more indignation than ever in my life I had done; and the only consideration which kept me from running to extremities, was that which should have inclined somebody to use me better."—*Letter to the Earl of Strafford*, 23rd *July*, 1712.

his own interests; and from the insidious foe, he became the open opponent of his political chieftain.

At length Mrs. Masham was induced to declare herself openly against Oxford; and from this moment the fate of the minister was sealed. The Queen, on her part, broken as she was in health and spirits, seems to have listened, in the early stages of these intrigues, with no slight uneasiness, to the projects for removing her once favoured minister and friend. She could not but remember, with a feeling of gratitude, those clandestine interviews and social meetings, when, cemented by a bond of common interest, they had so successfully plotted against their mutual enemies, the Whigs; she could not but feel grateful to Oxford for the moderation of his administration, and the quiet which it had procured her; but unfortunately that quiet, and its consequent exemption from the fatigues of sovereignty, it was no longer in the power of the minister to insure. The poor Queen had again become the centre of political intrigue; Mrs. Masham was daily instilling into her the necessity of a great ministerial change; and consequently, from her ruling passion, the love of peace, Anne, with the usual weakness, and perhaps selfishness, of her character, seems to have listened, at first with an unwilling, and afterwards with a willing ear, to the insidious representations advanced against Oxford by his enemies.

The same secret advisers who prevailed upon the Queen to part with her minister, had no sooner induced her to enter fully into their views, than they seem to have carefully supplied her with such arguments as were requisite to defend the step which she was determined on adopting. Accordingly, to the friends of the proscribed minister, and to such persons as she admitted to her confidence, she complained that Oxford had long neglected his official duties; that his language was confused and unintelligible; that his word was not to be depended upon; that his manners had long been personally disrespectful to her; and that he wanted even the common decency to keep the appointments which she made with him.

As regards a portion of these charges, we may infer, from our knowledge of Oxford's character and eccentric manners, that they were not altogether without foundation. On the other hand, however, the very vague and indefinite nature of these accusations,—the echo, probably, of the malicious and insidious representations of his enemies, and unsupported by any tangible evidence,—affords indirect testimony that Bolingbroke and Mrs. Masham had, in fact, no substantial charges to bring against him. Oxford, it is true, was a finished dissembler, and among the webs of chicanery which he was in the habit of weaving, it may be questioned whether he did not occasionally overstep the confines of strict veracity; but that he was ever guilty of a deliberate falsehood for the purpose of advancing his own interests, there is certainly no evidence to prove. It may be true, also, that he was a sycophant, and fawned on his sovereign, when out of power; and that he neglected her in a very unwarrantable manner as soon as she had assisted him in accomplishing his ends. Personal neglect is rarely forgiven by a woman, and never, perhaps, by a woman and a Queen. But accusations such as these, even if true, are evidence rather of bad manners and bad taste, and of a foolish and perhaps insolent security in office, than of incompetency or any criminal designs. It may be doubted, indeed, whether any measure was carried, during Oxford's administration, which in any degree affords reason for believing that he was ever wilfully heedless of the interests of his sovereign, and the liberty and happiness of the subject; or neglected the welfare of his country for his own.

There is extant a letter addressed by Oxford to Swift, which is especially curious, as having been written on the morning of the very day which his enemies had fixed upon to drive him from power. In this letter Oxford freely confesses, that for the last twelve months his influence had been merely nominal; and, moreover, prognosticates that the next morning he would be a private person. His anticipations did not deceive him. On the evening of that day, the four most remarkable political personages of the day, namely, the Queen, Oxford, Bolingbroke, and Mrs. Masham, met together in the same apartment, for the last time. The Queen was present as the dispenser of power; Oxford as the ruined and humbled statesman; and Bolingbroke and Mrs. Masham as the elated and insolent victors. Within the short space of three days the Queen was a corpse, and Mrs. Masham a neglected and despised woman: within a few more days Bolingbroke was an exile and a proscribed man, and Oxford in the Tower.

At this memorable meeting, Oxford, (either allowing his feelings of hatred and indignation to triumph over his better judgment and habitual calmness of language and manner, or else, aware that his fate was sealed, and that now for the last time it was in his power to address himself personally to his sovereign,) gave vent to an almost indecent ebullition of rage and abuse. Aware that his motives had been misinterpreted, and his conduct misrepresented, he made a fütile attempt to exculpate himself in the eyes of his sovereign, which was angrily retorted upon by Bolingbroke and Mrs. Masham. Argument led to recrimination; recrimination to reproaches; and reproaches to threats and personal invectives. Oxford boldly asserted that he had been made the victim of misrepresentation and lies. Regardless of the Queen's presence, he accused Mrs. Masham of being the inventor of the paltry scandal which had occasioned his fall; and the same evening, when he was required to deliver up his staff of office, he indulged in an idle and unworthy ebullition of puerile rage, vowing vengeance on those who had procured his ruin; and adding, that "he would leave some persons as low as he had found them." On the 27th of

July, 1714, Oxford resigned his post of Lord High Treasurer, and on the 1st of August following, the Queen expired.

The accession of George the First to the throne of England completed the political ruin of the Earl of Oxford. Although there existed no reasonable grounds for presuming him to have been implicated in the intrigues of the Jacobites for restoring the House of Stuart, yet he had been too closely connected with men who were known to have entertained those dangerous designs, not to render him an object of dislike and suspicion to the new sovereign. Moreover, in addition to the personal prejudices of George the First, he had to contend against the implacable hatred and malice of his old associates, the Whigs. It was unlikely that a party, which he had first deceived and deserted and afterwards ruined, should hesitate to retaliate on their arch-enemy, now that they were afforded an inviting opportunity for depriving him of the power to work them further annoyance.

Oxford, however, seems to have been blind to the danger which awaited him, and to have anticipated the accession of the House of Hanover as offering him a favourable opportunity of retrieving the position which he had lost. As it had been for some years a part of his temporizing policy to negotiate secretly with the Electoral family, he imagined that a long series of vows and professions must have securely purchased the gratitude of the new sovereign; and not only boasted of the credit which he was to enjoy under the new dynasty, but appears to have foolishly and confidently promised places and patronage to his former friends. To Lord Cowper he is said to have awarded the Chancellorship; to Lord Dartmouth, the Privy Seal; and to Mr. Bromley, the post of Secretary of State.

Bolingbroke, in detailing these evidences of Oxford's weakness, dwells with an evident and unworthy satisfaction on the mortification and discomfiture which awaited his too sanguine opponent. "When the King arrived," he says, "Oxford went to Greenwich with an affectation of pomp and of favour. Against his suspicious character, he was once in his life the bubble of his credulity; and this delusion betrayed him into a punishment more severe, in my sense, than all that has happened to him since, or than perpetual exile. He was affronted in the manner in which he was presented to the King. The meanest subject would have been received with goodness; the most obnoxious with an air of indifference; but he was received with the most distinguishing contempt. This treatment he had in the face of the nation. The King began his reign, in this instance, by punishing the ingratitude, the perfidy, the insolence which had been shown to his predecessor. Oxford fled from Court covered with shame; the object of the derision of the Whigs, and of the indignation of the Tories."

On the 10th of June, 1715, Mr., afterwards Sir

Robert Walpole, as chairman of the Secret Committee for collecting evidence against the late ministry, stood up in the House of Commons, and impeached Henry Lord Viscount Bolingbroke of high treason. After a short discussion, in which only two individuals came forward as the supporters of that extraordinary man, Lord Coningsby also stood up in his place. "The worthy chairman," he said, "has impeached the hand, but I impeach the head; he has impeached the clerk, and I the justice; he has impeached the scholar, and I the master. I impeach Robert, Earl of Oxford and Earl Mortimer of high treason, and other high crimes and misdemeanours." The motion, as in the case of Bolingbroke, was agreed to without a division, and the next day, on Oxford presenting himself in the House of Lords, his brother peers are said to have avoided him as if he had been infectious. A few days afterwards, Lord Coningsby, attended by several Whig members of the House of Commons, formally impeached him of high treason at the bar of the House of Lords. A discussion took place, in which Oxford himself bore a part, which terminated by the Peers ordering his committal to safe custody. He attempted to defend himself, in a speech distinguished by a decent dignity of language and demeanour, and apparently with a proud consciousness of the purity of his motives; but it was evident that his enemies had prejudged him, and that they were determined, if possible, to bring him to the block. "My Lords," he concluded his speech, "I am now to take leave of your Lordships, and of this honourable House, perhaps for ever: I shall lay down my life with pleasure in a cause favoured by my late dear, royal mistress. When I consider that I am to be judged by the justice, honour, and virtue of my peers, I shall acquiesce, and retire with great content; and, my Lords, God's will be done."

After the debate was closed, the Duke of Shrewsbury acquainting the House that the prisoner was suffering much from gravel, Oxford was allowed the indulgence of remaining in his own house, under the custody of the Black Rod. On his quitting the House, he was followed by a large concourse of people, who gratified him by their shouts of "High-Church and Oxford for ever." When, on the following day, he was again brought to the bar of the House of Lords, the Peers, (notwithstanding Dr. Mead declared that his life would be endangered by his committal to prison,) decided that he should be conveyed to the Tower. He was conducted thither by another formidable assemblage of the populace, who showed, by their generous sympathy with the oppressed statesman, and by the opprobrious expressions which they heaped on the Whigs, that the opinions of the existing ministry and of their German master, were widely different from those of the people of England.

The conduct of the Earl of Oxford, at this crisis of extreme difficulty and danger, assimilates rather to the conceptions which we form of the character of an ancient Roman, than to that of the man who, a few months before, had clung to power with a discreditable tenacity, and had resigned it with a vulgar display of intemperate rage. Turning from the exhortations of those friends who advised him to avoid the scaffold by flight, — diseased as he was in body, and broken in his fortunes, — he trusted proudly to the integrity of his past conduct, and stood alone in the consciousness of his own innocence. "They were quite mistaken in his temper," observes Pope, "who thought to get rid of him by advising him to make his escape from the Tower. He would have sat out the storm let the danger be what it would. He was a steady man, and had a great firmness of soul; and would have died unconcernedly, or perhaps, like Sir Thomas More, with a jest in his mouth."* Oxford, with unquestionable justice, may be accused of having acted as a sycophant and a dissembler; but whatever may have been his private weaknesses or public failings, it must be admitted that his conduct under actual proscription, and with the prospect before his eyes of suffering a violent death, was deserving of the highest praise. Pope thus eulogizes the philosophy of his friend:—

> "A soul supreme, in each hard instance tried,
> Above all pain, all anger, and all pride;
> The rage of power, the blast of public breath,
> The lust of lucre, and the dread of death."

The result of the formal investigation, which took place into Oxford's conduct, seems to have been an early conviction on the minds of his enemies as well as his friends, that no offence amounting to high treason could be reasonably laid to his charge. Satisfied of this fact, his enemies would willingly have deferred the trial from time to time, and thus have indirectly doomed him to a perpetual imprisonment, had not the Earl himself, after a confinement in the Tower of two years, insisted on their bringing him before the tribunal of his peers. With his characteristic prudence and caution, he not only waited patiently till time should have softened the acerbity of party feeling, but preferred his application at a period when a recent change in the administration, and some dissensions among its members, added considerably to his chances of obtaining an acquittal.

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* Spence, p. 168.

The ministry no sooner found themselves compelled to bring Oxford to trial, than their object seems to have been to procure his enlargement, without provoking an investigation which, perhaps, would have been little creditable to themselves. Accordingly, by means of Walpole, a feigned quarrel was got up between the Houses of Lords and Commons, as to the manner in which the prosecution was to be conducted; the Lords, it seems, were at once for proceeding to the charge of high treason, while the Commons were desirous of regularly investigating every article in the impeachment.

On the 24th of June, 1717, the day appointed for the trial, Westminster Hall presented the stirring and magnificent scene which it usually exhibits on such solemn occasions. The peers assembled at the appointed hour; the Commons attended as a committee of the whole House; the King, the Royal Family, and the foreign ambassadors, were present; and, with the usual ceremony, Harley was conducted from the Tower, and placed at the bar. As might have been anticipated, the dispute as to the mode of conducting the prosecution was renewed. The Lords, consequently, adjourned to their own house, and, after some discussion, announced their intention to adhere to their former resolution of proceeding at once to the articles of high treason. On this, the Commons demanded a free conference, which was refused: by degrees the dispute became more warm; the Lords sent a message to the other House that they intended forthwith to proceed with the trial; but the Commons took no notice of the intimation, and unceremoniously adjourned. On the 1st of July, the Lords again took their seats in Westminster Hall; the prisoner was called to the bar; no prosecutors made their appearance, and Oxford was unanimously acquitted.

From the period of his release from the Tower, the Earl of Oxford assumed the character of a private man. He seems to have contented himself with the society of learned persons, and with the amusement of adding to his noble library, and amassing that splendid collection of manuscripts, which, with the additions made by his son, Edward, the second Earl, was afterwards purchased by the Government, and deposited in the British Museum.

The Earl of Oxford was twice married. By his first wife, (Elizabeth, sister of Thomas, first Lord Foley,) he had issue, Edward, his successor, and two daughters — Abigail, married to George, Earl of Kinnoul, and Elizabeth, married to Peregrine, Marquis of Carmarthen, afterwards Duke of Leeds. The Earl's second wife was Sarah, daughter of Thomas Middleton, Esq., a son of Sir Hugh Middleton, Bart., by whom he had no issue.

If we may trust the assertion of Dr. Johnson in his fine poem, "The Vanity of Human Wishes," the last years of the fallen minister were afflicted by disease, engendered by his former attendance on courts, and by the vexations to which his ambition had subjected him.

> "What gave great Villiers to the assassin's knife,
> And fixed disease on Harley's closing life?
> What but their wish indulged in Courts to shine,
> And power too great to keep, or to resign?"

Possibly, there may be more of poetic licence than of severe truth in this passage; more especially, as the presumption of Oxford's bodily sufferings, and the inferences drawn from them by the poet, appear to be unsupported by any graver evidence.

The death of the Earl of Oxford took place at his house in Albemarle Street, London, on the 21st of May, 1724, in the sixty-fourth year of his age. His remains were interred, with those of his ancestors, in the vault of the family, at Brampton Brian, in Herefordshire.

HENRY ST. JOHN,

VISCOUNT BOLINGBROKE.

CHAPTER I.

His birth. — Sketch of his father, and anecdote. — St. John educated among the Puritans.—Is sent to Eton.—Sir Robert Walpole one of his school-fellows. — Removed to Christ-Church, Oxford.—His alternate fits of idleness and study there.—His profligacy on leaving college.—His unsuccessful attempts at poetry.—Verses addressed to Miss Clara Atkins. —His visit to the Continent, and subsequent marriage to the wealthy daughter of Sir Henry Winchescomb.—His separation from his wife.—Her letters to Swift and Harley.—St. John enters the House of Commons, and distinguishes himself by his eloquence.—He unites himself to Harley's party, and is appointed, in his twenty-sixth year, Secretary at War.— His respect for the Duke of Marlborough.— The Duke's kindly feelings towards him.—His retirement, with Harley, from office.—His letter to the Duke of Marlborough. —Returns, with Harley, to office, and is appointed Secretary of State.— Extract from Goldsmith's Life of Bolingbroke.—Queen Anne's dislike of St. John.—Extracts from Swift's journal to Stella.—St. John's difficulties in negotiating the Peace of Utrecht.—His visit to Paris.—Ratification of the Peace of Utrecht, and elevation of St. John to the Peerage, by the title of Viscount Bolingbroke.

Henry St. John, afterwards the celebrated Lord Bolingbroke, was born at Battersea, in Surrey, on the 1st of October, 1678, at a seat which had long been the manorial residence of his family. He was the eldest son of Henry St. John,—afterwards created Viscount St. John,—by Mary, daughter and co-heiress of Robert Rich, Earl of Warwick.

Of the father of the statesman little is known. Swift, however, says of him, in one of his letters; —"He is a man of pleasure, that walks about the Mall, and frequents St. James's coffee-house and the chocolate-houses;" and Mrs. Manley informs us that he was "a professed spark, spruced up in cherry and other gaudy-coloured silk stockings."* Like his illustrious son, he was probably a person of dissipated habits; for, in addition to the evidence of Swift, we find him tried and convicted for the murder of Sir William Estcourt, Bart., who was slain by him in a sudden quarrel. They were seated together at a social party, when, in the heat of a violent altercation which arose between them, St. John ran his sword through his friend's body before the rest of the party could interfere. The King granted him a reprieve for a long term of years, which the extreme old age he afterwards attained rendered it not improbable that he would outlive. He died in the month of April 1742, on the verge of ninety.

Bolingbroke imbibed his first principles of religion among the Puritans. It must be regarded as an unfortunate circumstance; for not only does it seem to have violently prejudiced him ever afterwards against that sect, but their unpalatable gloom and severity, and their long faces and exhortations, appear to have early sown the seeds of infidelity in his mind. His education had been entrusted to the care of his grandmother, — a daughter of the celebrated Oliver St. John, Chief Justice under the Commonwealth,—who selected for his tutor her own spiritual adviser, Daniel Burgess, a well-known fanatical preacher of his time. He seems to have been a zealous, and was, probably, a very good man, but his notions of education appear to have extended no further than enforcing on the mind of his pupil the necessity of perusing ponderous folios, and listening to eccentric exhortations. Bolingbroke, some years afterwards, — alluding to the Commentaries of Chrysostom,—observes in a letter to Pope,—" He puts me in mind of a Puritanical parson, Dr. Manton, who, if I mistake not, (for I have not looked into the folio since I was a boy, and condemned sometimes to read in it,) made 119 sermons on the 119th psalm." In a letter to Swift, also, we find, —" My next shall be as long as one of Dr. Manton's sermons, who taught my youth to yawn, and prepared me to be a high Churchman, that I might never hear him read, nor read him more." Bolingbroke has underrated the pious labours of Manton, for he actually composed *one hundred and ninety* sermons on the psalm in question, which were published in one volume, with a portrait of the author prefixed. *

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* New Atalantis, vol. i. p. 192.

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* London, 1681, fol. It is remarkable that Lord Mahon has fallen into the same numerical error as Bolingbroke. " Man-

Bolingbroke, at an early age, was sent to Eton, where, among his school-fellows in that classic academy, he numbered Sir Robert Walpole, afterwards his bitterest political opponent. Coxe remarks, in his Life of Walpole,—"The parts of Mr. St. John were lively and brilliant, those of Walpole more steady. Walpole was industrious and diligent, because his talents required application; St. John was negligent, because his quickness of apprehension rendered less labour necessary."

From Eton Bolingbroke was removed to Christ Church college, Oxford, where he miserably disappointed the expectations of his friends, by preferring idleness to exertion, and dissipation to a thirst for academical honours. Bolingbroke, however, was never, at any period, entirely a debauchee. There seem to have been valuable moments,—many of them, probably, snatched even in the flush of excitement,—when, in the silence of his own chamber, he applied himself to nobler studies, and more dignified pursuits. It could not, indeed, have been from mere intuition, that he acquired that varied information, which, though on some subjects more showy than substantial, others have spent years of application and anxiety

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ton," says his Lordship, "was a non-conforming and most voluminous divine, very worthy, but a little tedious; who, being impressed with some fanciful idea as to the analogy of numbers, wrote 119 sermons on the 119th Psalm!" *Hist. of England*, vol. i. p. 36. A reprint of these sermons has recently appeared. *London*, 1840.

in rendering themselves equally proficient. Even at this early period, he is known to have been universally admired for the subtlety of his reasoning, his amazing memory, his brilliant conversational powers, and all those personal, as well as mental accomplishments, which alike give a promise of future eminence, and could not fail to ensure popularity to a young man of family and fortune, on his first entrance into the world.

For the first years after he quitted Oxford, his love of pleasure remained unsatiated, and no description could exaggerate the wild profligacy of his career. His drunken frolics were the theme of every tongue; Miss Gumley, who was said to be the most beautiful courtezan of her time, was his acknowledged mistress; his social parties were the scene of riotous licence; and the most finished profligates at the court of Charles the Second could scarcely have surpassed the libertinism of his career. "His youth," says Lord Chesterfield, "was distinguished by all the tumult and storm of pleasures, in which he most licentiously triumphed, disclaiming all decorum. His fine imagination has often been heated and exhausted with his body in celebrating and deifying the prostitute of the night; and his convivial joys were pushed to all the extravagance of frantic Bacchanals." "I have spoken to an old man," says Goldsmith, "who assured me that he saw him and one of his companions run naked through the Park in a fit of intoxication; but then it was a time when public decency might be transgressed with less danger than at present." By his friends, indeed, St. John was regarded as a gifted though irregular genius; by the world, as a mere frequenter of coffee-houses, then the fashionable resort of the men of pleasure of the day.

Nevertheless, his better genius appears occasionally to have obtained the ascendant. He himself tells us, in an eloquent passage, "The love of study and desire of knowledge were what I felt all my life; and though my genius, unlike the dæmon of Socrates, whispered so softly, that very often I heard him not in the hurry of those passions with which I was transported, yet some calmer hours there were, and in them I hearkened to him." But the ambition, which afterwards aimed at dethroning kings, contented itself, at this period, with achieving the character of a finished rake. His object was to become the prince of debauchees, and to outstrip the oldest profligate in his iniquity; and as he possessed an adequate fortune, great personal beauty, a persuasive eloquence, and a most engaging address, we cannot wonder that he was foremost in the race.

Ambition was the ruling vice of Bolingbroke, and rendered a great mind its slave. It originated every motive and coloured every action of his life. In the first instance, it induced him to figure as a libertine, and in its second phasis, seems to have prompted him to seek distinction as a poet. In both cases he equally misunderstood himself. His poetry is frigid and inharmonious; it never rises above mediocrity, and usually sinks below it.

"In his versification," says Goldsmith, "there is more wit than taste, more labour than harmony." Indeed, of the six poetical pieces which are known to be his production, it would be difficult to say which is the most deficient in merit. His own good sense, however,—added to the want of encouragement which his verses met with from his friend Pope, and the actual abuse which was heaped upon them by Swift,—appear to have early convinced him that his genius was ill-suited for poetry.

The most remarkable of his poetical effusions is unquestionably a copy of verses addressed "To Miss Clara A——s." The lady whom he thus honoured, was a beautiful creature of the name of Clara Atkins, of very indifferent reputation, who sold oranges in the Court of Requests, then the lobby of the House of Lords, and a fashionable lounging-place of the period. Bolingbroke, it appears, had endeavoured to instil into her some feeling of self-respect, and with this view appears to have adopted the initiatory and singular method of installing her as his mistress. Probably, with the exception of Prior's Chloe, a more unworthy creature was never deified by the pen of the poet.

TO MISS CLARA A——S.

Dear thoughtless Clara, to my verse attend,
Believe for once thy lover and thy friend.
Heaven to each sex has various gifts assigned,
And shown an equal care of human kind.
Strength does to man's imperial race belong;

To you, that beauty which subdues the strong.
But as our strength, when misapplied, is lost,
And what should save, urges our ruin most;
Just so, when beauty prostituted lies,
Of bawds the prey, of rakes the abandoned prize,
Women no more their empire can maintain,
Nor hope, vile slaves of lust, by love to reign:
Superior charms but make their case the worse,
And what should be their blessing proves their curse.
O nymph! that might, reclined on Cupid's breast,
Like Psyche, soothe the God of Love to rest;
Or, if ambition moved thee, Jove enthral,
Brandish his thunder, and direct its fall!
Survey thyself, contemplate every grace
Of that sweet form, of that angelic face;
Then, Clara, say, were those delicious charms
Meant for lewd brothels, and rude ruffians' arms?
No, Clara, no! that person and that mind
Were formed by Nature and by Heaven designed
For nobler ends: to these return, though late—
Return to these, and so avert thy fate.
Think, Clara, think, nor will that thought be vain,
Thy slave, thy Harry, doomed to drag his chain
Of love, ill-treated and abused, that he
From more inglorious chains might rescue thee:
Thy drooping health restored by his fond care,
Once more thy beauty its full lustre wear;
Moved by his love, by his example taught,
Soon shall thy soul, once more with virtue fraught,
With kind and generous truth thy bosom warm,
And thy fair mind, like thy fair person, charm.
To virtue thus and to thyself restored,
By all admired, by one alone adored,
Be to thy Harry ever kind and true,
And live for him who more than dies for you.

Whether Bolingbroke grew tired of this beautiful girl, or whether he found her incapable of moral improvement, certain it is that after a short period he allowed her to return to her original avocation of an orange-girl.

At the time when the wild frolics of St. John were the talk of the town, he could scarcely have attained the age of twenty. It was about this period, that his father allowed him to pay a visit to the continent, where he remained about two years. On his return,—whether from a desire to wean himself from his former pernicious pursuits, or whether tempted by the advantages of marrying a woman of fortune,—he united himself, in 1700, to a daughter of Sir Henry Winchescomb. Sir Henry was a descendant of the famous Jack of Newbury,—an opulent clothier in the reign of Henry the Eighth,—who, in addition to many acts of princely munificence, which are still remembered in his native town, entertained that monarch and his court with a cost and magnificence which could scarcely have been exceeded by the first noble of the day. On the marriage of St. John with the descendant of this personage, he received with her the then considerable portion of forty thousand pounds; and, in addition to this sum, afterwards came into possession, by right of his wife, of some valuable estates in Wiltshire, Surrey, and Middlesex. Of this property, it may be remarked, he afterwards forfeited a considerable portion in consequence of his attainder.

The marriage of Bolingbroke, though, for a time it had the effect of checking him in his wild career of profligacy, yet, in the end, was productive of no beneficial effect. His love of pleasure, and especially his promiscuous admiration of women, remained unsated; and consequently, for many reasons, his union could not fail to be an unhappy one. His wife complained of his frequent infidelities, while St. John, on his part, retorted with charges of the obstinacy of her temper, and her wearisome and perpetual reproaches. These disagreeable recriminations ended, as might naturally be expected, in a separation; nor was their intercourse ever afterwards renewed.

Whatever may have been the nature of the sentiments which St. John retained towards his misused wife, certain it is that *her* feelings in regard to him ever continued to be those of admiration, and apparently of love. Sixteen years after their marriage, and about two years after Bolingbroke's political disgrace, she thus writes to Swift, the intimate friend of her husband:—"As to my temper, if it is possible, it is more insipid than ever, except in some places, and there I am a little fury, *especially if they dare mention my dear lord without respect*, which sometimes happens. I have not yet seen her Grace (the Duchess of Ormond), but design it in a day or two: we have kept a constant correspondence ever since *our* misfortune, and her Grace is pleased to call me sister." The following brief specimen of her correspondence,—addressed to Lord Harley, the son of her husband's early friend,—will not, perhaps, appear uninteresting to the reader. It has not, hitherto, we believe, appeared in print:—

"Bucklebury, August 18th, 1713.

"My Lord,—I am extremely glad to hear my Lord Treasurer takes care of his health. I hope he will continue to do so, for though I am *a poor discarded mistress*, yet my best wishes shall always attend his lordship. I beg my most humble service to him and my Lady, and am, my Lord, your most faithful servant,

"F. Bolingbroke."*

Indorsed
"Rec^{d} at Wimple, Aug. 22, 1713."

Swift, who was intimate with Lady Bolingbroke, invariably speaks of her with respect. On one occasion he says,—"She is a great favourite of mine;" and more than once he seems to sympathize with her isolated situation and unequivocal wrongs.

Shortly after his marriage, St. John took his seat in Parliament as member for Wotton-Basset, in Wiltshire, a place where his family-interest was considerable. He had now entered the proper field of his ambition, and his splendid and, perhaps, unequalled powers as an orator and a statesman began rapidly to rivet themselves on public attention. He had been only in the House of Commons, a few months, when it was admitted, even by his political opponents, that his wit, eloquence, and discrimination, were qualities which the House had never hitherto seen united in so extraordinary a degree in so young a person.

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* Add. MSS. 4163.

Although both the father and grandfather of St. John had been Whigs, and although that party were, at the period of which we speak, in power, St. John, either unwilling to join an administration of which all the higher offices were already filled, or, foreseeing that the wily genius of Harley must hereafter work itself into the direction of the helm, unhesitatingly joined his fortunes to those of that celebrated man. The result proved that he acted wisely for his own interests, for on the secession of several of the high Tories from the Godolphin administration, in 1704, Harley came into power as Secretary of State, and, at the same time, St. John, now in his twenty-sixth year, received the appointment of Secretary at War.

The Duke of Marlborough was at this period pursuing his glorious career on the continent, and it is remarkable that the two most brilliant engagements during the whole war—the battles of Blenheim and Ramilies—took place during the time St. John was Secretary at War. It was, probably, from a feeling of gratitude for the assistance rendered him by St. John, that Marlborough, notwithstanding their subsequent estrangement, ever retained a sincere affection for his younger colleague. St. John, on his part, professed, on all occasions, the warmest admiration of the Duke's extraordinary talents, and " a true, unaffected love" for his person. It may be remarked that in the letter in which this phrase occurs, the following superscription was discovered in the hand-writing of the Duchess of Marlborough:—" 'Tis certain that the Duke of Marlborough never was so kind to any man as to St. John; and I have heard my Lord Godolphin say, that he never had anything to reproach himself of, in the whole time that he served the Queen, but in complying with the Duke of Marlborough in doing unreasonable things, in point of money, for Mr. St. John, at the Duke of Marlborough's request."* It was the Duke's custom to style the former familiarly "Harry St. John," and when he lost his only son, Lord Blandford, he remarked that he had now no comfort left but in Harry St. John, whom he loved and regarded as his own son.†

On the dismissal of Harley from office in 1707, St. John, unwilling to sacrifice his principles, preferred following the fortunes of his friend, and retired with him into a private station. Moreover, on the dissolution of Parliament, he withdrew from the representation of Wotton-Basset, and passed the two next years which preceded his return to office, in the severest study. To the Duke of Marlborough he writes, on the 8th September, 1709:—" It is impossible, I find, to be so much out of the way as not to hear of the triumphs of your Grace's arms; the sound of them has reached even me, and, at a time when I began to forget the world, has made me think of it again with pleasure. I use the liberty which your grace was pleased to allow me with discretion; but if I did not trouble you on this occasion, I should fail in doing justice to a heart full of joy for your success, zeal for your service, and love for your person."*

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* Private Correspondence of Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, vol. 2, p. 292.

† Macpherson, vol. 3, p. 532, from Carte's Papers.

Bolingbroke afterwards affected to speak of his literary seclusion at this period as the most agreeable era in his existence. Swift writes to Stella, on the 12th January, 1711,—"When Mr. St. John was turned out from being Secretary at War three years ago, he retired to the country; there he was talking of something he would have written over his summer-house, and a gentleman gave him these verses:—

'From business and the noisy world retired,
Nor vexed by love, nor by ambition fired,
Gently I wait the call of Charon's boat,
Still drinking like a fish, and loving like a goat.'

"He swore to me he could hardly bear the jest; for he pretended to retire like a philosopher, though he was not twenty-eight years old; and I believe the thing was true; for he had been a thorough rake. I think the three grave lines do introduce the last well enough."

In 1710, St. John was again returned for the borough of Wotton-Basset; and now commenced the most important epoch of his life. On the accession of the Tories to power, Harley was appointed to the direction of affairs, with the offices of Chancellor and Treasurer of the Exchequer; and, at the same time, St. John, in consequence of his former services and tried abilities, was advanced to the important situation of Secretary of State. It was now that his splendid genius was allowed a fair field for display.

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* Marlborough Correspondence, vol. 3, p. 387.

"In the capacity which he now filled," says Goldsmith, "he discovered a degree of genius and assiduity that, perhaps, have never been known to be united in one person to the same degree. The English annals scarce produce a more trying juncture, or that required such various abilities to regulate. He was then placed in a sphere where he was obliged to conduct the machine of state, struggling with a thousand various calamities; a desperate and enraged party, whose characteristic it has ever been to bear none in power but themselves; a war conducted by an able general, his professed opponent, and whose victories only tended to render him every day more formidable; a foreign enemy possessed of endless resources, and seeming to gather strength from every defeat; an insidious alliance, that wanted only to gain the advantages of victory without contributing to the expenses of the combat; a weak, declining mistress, that was led by every report, and seemed ready to listen to whatever was said against him; still more, a gloomy, indolent, and suspicious colleague, that envied his power and hated his abilities."*

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* Life of Bolingbroke, Goldsmith's Miscell. Works, vol. iv. pp. 40, 41.

The dislike that Queen Anne entertained for St. John,—a circumstance which Goldsmith here enumerates as one of the numerous difficulties which he had to contend against,—was occasioned by the libertine life he was known to have led. From the same cause Mrs. Masham is said to have been no less prejudiced against the young and handsome statesman; indeed, the repugnance with which he was regarded, both by his royal mistress and the reigning favourite, added to the feelings of dislike and jealousy which Harley had begun to entertain towards his younger colleague, would, not improbably, have led to his being unceremoniously removed from the ministry, had it not been for the paramount necessity of making use of his talents in the celebrated Treaty of Utrecht, and entrusting him with the consequent mission to the Court of France. Not only was he singularly well adapted, alike from the peculiar bent of his genius and his graceful and insinuating manner, to conduct a difficult and very intricate negotiation, at what was then regarded as the politest court in Europe, but he is also known to have been the only member of the administration who possessed a competent knowledge of the French language.*

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* Macpherson, vol. ii. p. 530. On the accession of George the First it was surmised that, for the same reason, Mr. Wortley (the husband of the celebrated Lady M. W. Montagu,) would grow into great favour with the new monarch: it seems that, with the exception of Lord Halifax, he was the only Lord of the Treasury who could converse with the King in French. Lady M. W. Montagu's Letters, vol. i. p. 34.

If retirement had effected any reformation in St. John's conduct, he no sooner re-appeared in public life as a minister of state, than he reverted to his former irregularities. Even Swift exhibits an unwonted squeamishness when describing to Stella the Champagne and Burgundy suppers of the gay Secretary, and the wanton conversation permitted at his table. These irregularities seem, at length, to have seriously affected St. John's health, and to have caused undeserved pain to his unhappy and neglected wife. Swift, in a letter to Stella, dated the 7th of April, 1711, observes,—"I called this evening to see Mr. Secretary, who has been ill with the gravel, and pain in his back, by Burgundy and Champagne, added to the sitting up all night at business: I found him drinking tea, while the rest were at Champagne, and was very glad of it. I have chid him so severely that I hardly know whether he would take it well. Then I went and sat an hour with Mrs. St. John, who is growing a great favourite of mine: she goes to the Bath on Wednesday, for she is much out of health, and has begged me to take care of the Secretary." Three days afterwards, Swift writes to the same correspondent,—"I went to take leave of poor Mrs. St. John, who gave me strict charge to take care of the Secretary in her absence; said she had none to trust but me; *and the poor creature's tears came fresh into her eyes.*" Four months afterwards we find a still more striking notice of St. John's profligacy. "Lord

Radnor and I were walking the Mall this evening," says Swift, "and Mr. Secretary met us, and took a turn or two, and then stole away, and we both believe it was to pick up some wench; and to-morrow he will be at the cabinet with the Queen: so goes the world!"

Swift, about this period, draws the following portrait of his gifted and mercurial friend: "I think Mr. St. John the greatest young man I ever knew: wit, capacity, beauty, quickness of apprehension, good learning, and an excellent taste; the best orator in the House of Commons; admirable conversation, good nature, and good manners; generous, and a despiser of money. His only fault is talking to his friends in way of complaint of too great a load of business, which looks a little like affectation; and he endeavours too much to mix the fine gentleman with the man of business. What truth and sincerity he may have, I know not. He is now but thirty-two, and has been Secretary above a year. He turns the whole Parliament, who can do nothing without him." Bolingbroke himself frequently complains in his letters that, on post-days, he is unable to lay down his pen the whole day, and that he is constantly detained at his office for two whole days together. Swift once remarked to him—"*You were always my hero;*" and in a letter to Stella, he says,—"I have told him sometimes that, if I were a dozen years younger, I would cultivate his favour, and trust my fortune with his."

The chief objects to which the labours of St. John were directed, in conducting the treaty of Utrecht, and to the accomplishment of which the whole powers of his vigorous mind were directed, were the recal of the Duke of Marlborough from Flanders, and the bringing to a close a protracted war, which, in the eyes of half England, had now reduced the country to a condition verging on bankruptcy and ruin. Without the slightest desire to defend the peace of Utrecht as either a wise or an honourable measure, it is, nevertheless, impossible to overrate the steadiness and ability which Bolingbroke displayed in the progress of the negotiations, nor would it be easy to exaggerate the various obstacles and difficulties he was destined to encounter at every step. The number of conflicting interests engaged throughout the different Courts of Europe; the enmity and jealousy with which each regarded the claims of the other; and the utter impossibility of giving satisfaction to all, rendered the pending negotiation one of the most complicated and difficult of any recorded in history.

At home, Bolingbroke had to encounter, almost single-handed, the entire influence and genius of the Whig party, with the great Duke of Marlborough at their head. The Whigs were naturally anxious to keep their favourite general employed; they contended, moreover, against a measure which they conscientiously believed to be an unwise one, and they contended the more fiercely, because party interests and prejudices were deeply and acrimoniously concerned.

Abroad, the difficulties which Bolingbroke had to contend against were even more dispiriting. Our allies, the Dutch, perceiving what important advantages were to be reaped by being led to the field by so successful a general as the Duke of Marlborough, were, of course, unwilling to terminate a war which they foresaw must be sufficiently advantageous to themselves, while it was carried on chiefly at the expense of the English nation. There were, moreover, other conflicting interests engaged, and other intrigues at work; and, of all the European countries that had borne a part in the late hostilities, France and England alone appear to have been sincerely and heartily desirous of bringing hostilities to a close, and of enjoying once more the advantages of peace.

As a first step towards the accomplishment of the desired peace, a secret negotiation had been set on foot between the Courts of Versailles and St. James, which was commenced, on the part of England, by sending over the celebrated poet, Prior, to Paris. Prior returned in due time, accompanied by Monsieur Mesnager, as agent of the French government. The secrecy, however, with which the Ministry were compelled to conduct their proceedings, appears to have excited considerable alarm at the period, without being recompensed by any adequate advantages. Treaty followed treaty, and negotiation succeeded to negotiation, but still with the same dispiriting prospect of ultimate discomfiture; and yet throughout this busy and harassing period, notwithstanding the repeated failure of his favourite schemes, we find the mind of St. John still buoyant under disappointment, and his powers cheerfully opposing themselves to the host of difficulties which encountered him. Placing the most perfect confidence in the genius and resources of his own mind, we find him at one time conducting the complicated machinery of foreign politics; at another crushing the machinations of his enemies in Parliament; and in the midst of this hurry and variety of employments, contributing to the periodical papers of the day; replying to the arguments and invectives of the Whig writers, and clearly demonstrating to the nation how much the burden of the war rested upon England, and how little was sustained by the Dutch, who alone reaped the advantages of its continuance.

Notwithstanding the extraordinary personal exertions of St. John, the negotiations continued to be tediously protracted till the month of July, 1712, when he was himself sent to Paris to conduct the treaty in person, and to counteract the intrigues and opposition of the Dutch. His instructions were, to endeavour "to remove all difficulties and differences that might obstruct the general suspension of arms between England and France from taking place, or settling the treaty of peace in such a course as might bring it to a happy and speedy conclusion." It was a singular circumstance, as related to Spence by St. John himself, that, in the three weeks which preceded his departure on his memorable mission, he made himself sufficiently master of Spanish to be able to read and answer letters in that language.

St. John was not only received by the French King with the most distinguished marks of respect, but, in the gay circles of Paris, homage was universally paid to his graceful manners and brilliant abilities. In Paris, as in London, he sought to combine the character of a fine gentleman with the reputation of being a man of business; and, at the same time that he conducted the object of his mission with all the address and ability which his friends had anticipated from him, he rendered himself no less an object of general curiosity by his gaiety, his libertinism, and his wit.

St. John, having at length successfully performed the object of his mission, took leave of the French King, Louis the Fourteenth, on the 27th of August, on which occasion that magnificent monarch presented him with a diamond ring valued at about four thousand pounds sterling.* Within a few months, treaties of peace and commerce were signed between France and England, the ratification of which is known by the name of the Peace of Utrecht. St. John received all the applause which his talents and exertions merited; and these were considered so extraordinary that, even his enemies, while they violently opposed his measures, could not but acknowledge the greatness of his genius. In July, 1712, he was created Baron St. John of Lydiard Tregoye, in Wiltshire, and Viscount Bolingbroke; and the same year was appointed Lord-Lieutenant of the county of Essex. His father is said to have remarked to him, on hearing of his son's intended elevation to the peerage:—"Ah! Harry, I always said you would be hanged, but now I find you will be beheaded."

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* The apartment at Versailles, (well known as the *Cabinet du Roi*,) in which Bolingbroke received his celebrated audiences with Louis the Fourteenth, is of itself a history. It was here that he used to discuss the merits of his magnificent schemes with his ministers, Colbert, Louvois, and Torcy. Here he took leave of Marshal Villars, when the fate of his monarchy depended on the ensuing campaign. It was here that he introduced to the grandees of Spain, his grandson, the Duke

d'Anjou, as their King. Here Louis the Fifteenth signed the treaty which expelled the Jesuits; and, finally, it was in a recess of one of the windows of this room that Louis the Sixteenth received from the Marquis de Dreux-Brézé the celebrated reply of Mirabeau, that "the Deputies of the States were assembled by the will of the people, and would not leave their place of meeting except by the force of his master's bayonets."

CHAPTER II.

St John's taste for literary society and patronage of Dryden.—His generosity to literary men.—Extracts from Spence's Anecdotes of Pope.—Mutual admiration of Pope and St. John.—St. John's subsequent attempts to blast the poet's memory.—Probable reasons for his vindictiveness.—Gradual estrangement between Harley and St. John, and causes of their estrangement.—St. John's letters to the Earl of Strafford and Sir William Wyndham.—St. John's ambitious hopes disappointed by the death of Queen Anne.—Extract from his letter to Swift on the occasion.—Accession of George the First.—Earl of Dorset despatched to Hanover to convey to him the news of his accession.—Addison appointed Secretary by the Regency.—Insults offered to St. John.—His dignified equanimity.—His letters to Swift and Lord Strafford.—Dismissed from all his employments.—Harley's humiliating reception by George the First.—St. John's delight at his rival's mortification.—He is threatened with impeachment, and escapes from England in the disguise of a servant.—Curious letter respecting his flight.—Letter from St. John to Lord Lansdowne, dated from Dover.—Violence of his enemies in Parliament.

The fact is, unquestionably, to Bolingbroke's credit, that amidst the multiplicity of his political engagements and the harassing nature of his duties as a statesman, he still found leisure to enjoy the society and to cultivate the friendship of literary men. Even in the midst of his early debaucheries, he had given evidence, by the eagerness with which he had courted the acquaintance of the immortal Dryden, that a want of taste was not among his failings. St. John, though at the time of the poet's death he could only have entered into his twenty-second year, is, nevertheless, confidently asserted to have been "the patron, the friend, and the protector of that great poet,"* and Pope says, in his Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot,—

> "And St. John's self, great Dryden's friend before,
> With open arms received one poet more."

Later in life, Bolingbroke formed one of a splendid galaxy of genius, in which his own star was not the least dazzling. Pope, Swift, Atterbury, Prior, Parnell, Gay, Arbuthnot! when will so brilliant a circle again assemble beneath the same roof, or join in social converse beside the same hearth! Bolingbroke, to his credit, was the friend of literary men; and in addition to his having opened his purse, or extended his patronage, to a host of writers whose names are no longer interesting to posterity, it may be mentioned that Dryden, Prior, Gay, and Thomson, received substantial favours at his hands. Neither does a contrariety of political opinion appear to have made the slightest difference in his liberality, when the object was a deserving one. Steele, though closely leagued with the opposite party, experienced proofs of his kindness, and Swift seldom importuned him in vain in favour of a suffering Whig. He forgot even the politics of Addison in his admiration of his genius; and on the first night on which "Cato" was represented on the stage, not only induced a large number of friends to accompany him to the theatre, but liberally rewarded Booth, the actor, for his splendid personification of the hero. So great was his admiration of Booth, both as an actor and as a social companion, that during several nights in every week his chariot was seen waiting at the door of the theatre, in order to convey the performer, after the play was over, to the country-seat of his patron.*

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* Biog. Brit. vol. v. p. 3561, note.

The admiration which Pope entertained of Bolingbroke's genius, was not confined to mere poetical rhapsodies. "Lord Bolingbroke," he said, "is much the best writer of the age. Nobody knows half the extent of his excellence but two or three of his most intimate friends. Whilst abroad, he wrote a consolation to a man in exile, so much in Seneca's style, that was he living now among us, one should conclude that he had written every word of it." Again, Pope observed to Spence:—"There is one thing in Lord Bolingbroke, which seems peculiar to himself. He has so great a memory, as well as judgment, that if he is alone and without books, he can sit down by himself, as another man would in his study, and refer to his books, on such a particular subject in them, in his own mind, and write as fully on it as another would with all his books about him. He sits like an intelligence, and recollects all the questions within himself."* Pope admitted to Spence, that Bolingbroke had supplied him almost entirely with the thoughts and arguments contained in his great moral poem, and that, in addition to their frequent conversations, he had sent him seven or eight sheets of writing on the subject, which became the frame-work of the poem. Lord Bathurst also mentioned in conversation with Dr. Blair, that "he had read the MS. in Lord Bolingbroke's hand-writing, and was at a loss whether most to admire the elegance of Lord Bolingbroke's prose, or the beauty of Mr. Pope's verse."† A room is still pointed out, in what remains of Bolingbroke's house, at Battersea, as that in which Pope composed his "Essay on Man."

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* MS. note to Cibber's Apology for his Life.

If Bolingbroke admired Pope as a poet, Pope no less venerated Bolingbroke as a philosopher; their friendship, and their mutual admiration of each other continued to the last; and when Pope was on his death-bed, the well-known circumstance of Bolingbroke weeping over the bard of his idolatry, and the friend of his choice, affords an affecting and beautiful picture. Spence, who was present at the scene, describes him as leaning over Pope's chair in a "melancholy attitude," and frequently exclaiming, amidst his sobs and tears, "Ah! Great God, what is man!"—"When I was telling his lordship," adds Spence, "that Mr. Pope, on every catching and recovering of his mind, was always saying something kindly either of his present or absent friends, and that this, in some cases, was so surprising, that it seemed to me as if his humanity had outlived his understanding; Lord Bolingbroke said,—'It has so,' and then added, 'I never in my life knew a man that had so tender a heart for his particular friends, or a more general friendship for mankind. I have known him these thirty years, and value myself more for that man's love and friendship, than,'"— Here Bolingbroke is described by Spence as sinking his head, and losing his voice in hysterical sobs.

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* Spence's Anecdotes of men and books, pp. 165, 166. Pope observed at another time: — "Lord Bolingbroke is something superior to anything I have seen in human nature. You know I don't deal much in hyperboles. I quite think what I say." *Ibid.* p. 6.

† Letter from Dr. Blair in Boswell's Johnson. See also D'Israeli's Miscellanies of Literature.

We cannot but regret that there should have appeared an afterpiece to this pathetic scene, which detracts considerably both from its moral and dramatic effect. It is almost needless to add, that we allude to the well-known breach of confidence and friendship, which Bolingbroke subsequently discovered that the deceased poet had committed. Bolingbroke, it seems, had entrusted to his friend's keeping, the manuscript of his celebrated essay "The Patriot King," with the understanding that only a few copies should be printed for private distribution. Pope, on the other hand, caused a large edition to be struck off, of fifteen hundred copies, which, at the time of his death, remained in the hands of the printer.

Such is the brief outline of a singular story, which long constituted the gossip of every literary circle, and, at the time when it transpired, gave rise to more than one angry pamphlet, and fiery retort. According to the confident assertions of the enemies of Pope, it was the intention of the poet, in the event of his surviving Bolingbroke, either to have published the work as his own, or to have realized a large sum of money by disposing of an eighteen-penny pamphlet at a guinea a copy. These unlikely suppositions, however, are indignantly repelled by Warburton. He affirms that Pope had no other motive than to perpetuate a valuable work, which might otherwise have been lost to posterity; he shows how improbable it was, for many reasons, that the poet could ever have entertained an intention of declaring himself the author of the work; and he adds, that, as there was evidently but little likelihood of his surviving Bolingbroke, the charge of avarice was put entirely out of the question.

Whatever may have been Bolingbroke's private impressions, in regard to the motives of Pope's conduct, his anger and indignation certainly carried him beyond all bounds of decency: —"His thirst of vengeance," says Dr. Johnson, "incited him to blast the memory of the man over whom he had wept in his last struggles;

and he employed Mallet, another friend of Pope, to tell the tale to the public, with all its aggravations." The "tale" in question, which appeared in the form of a preface to a revised edition of "The Patriot King," would be looked upon but as a piece of mere impertinence, had it issued unauthorized from the hireling pen of Mallet; but having been unquestionably permitted by, if it did not originate in, Bolingbroke, we cannot regard it as other than a most unjustifiable act. In the work in question, Mallet more than once speaks contemptuously of Pope as "*this man;*" and yet that this miserable tirade obtained the approval of Bolingbroke, and received more than one tinge of bitterness from his pen, is proved by the original manuscript draught, in the British Museum, where frequent alterations occur in the hand-writing of the latter.

There are two circumstances to which Bolingbroke's vindictiveness has been attributed, and in neither instance are they very creditable to him as a philosopher. It seems, in the first place, that in the copies which Pope had caused to be printed of "The Patriot King," there were discovered several amendments and omissions, which were little likely to be acceptable to Bolingbroke as an author. The remaining cause of offence, was the circumstance of Pope having preferred Warburton to be his executor, and the editor of his works; Warburton, as is well known, being regarded by Bolingbroke with invincible detestation. Such are the circumstances, which, as far as Bolingbroke is concerned, were the occasion of this memorable quarrel—circumstances, which, if they throw suspicion on the character and motives of Pope, must be admitted to be at least equally discreditable to Bolingbroke. But it is time to revert to his history as a statesman, and to the stirring events in which he was so conspicuous an actor.

After the successful termination of the treaty of Utrecht, Bolingbroke had sufficient leisure to attend to what was passing at home, and to engage in private animosities and selfish intrigues. The friendship which had existed between Harley and himself had gradually subsided into coolness, and latterly had passed from coolness into absolute dislike. Whatever may have been the secret history of their first dissensions, it was unquestionably the fact, that Bolingbroke was envious of the exalted position of Harley, and that Harley was morbidly jealous of the abilities of Bolingbroke. To this unfortunate disagreement, not only their own personal interests, but those of their royal mistress, and the safety of their mutual friends, were in the end miserably and shamefully sacrificed.

Bolingbroke's account of his feelings at this period; his hatred of his colleague, his estimate of his own services, and his defence of his political conduct; may be gleaned from his epistolary correspondence. The circumstance which appears to have principally rankled in his mind, was the Queen's refusal—of course, at the instigation of Harley—to confer on him the Order of the Garter; the denial which he met with being rendered the more unpalatable, in consequence of there being vacant, at the time, as many as six ribands, one of which Harley chose to confer upon himself. After twelve years' laborious service, and after the talent he had displayed in conducting the treaty of Utrecht, as well as in leading the House of Commons, he had certainly some right to expect the gratitude both of his sovereign and his colleagues. The Queen, indeed, had rewarded him with a peerage; but the honour, after all, was an empty one. His elevation, inasmuch as it removed him from his proper sphere, the House of Commons, is usually alluded to by him rather as a degradation than as a reward.

In a letter addressed to the Earl of Strafford, dated 23rd July, 1712, Bolingbroke thus eloquently describes his feelings:—"I am to thank you, my lord, for the very kind part which you took in the honour her Majesty was very lately pleased to confer on me. It would ill become the friendship I profess to you, if I did not naturally own what passes in my soul upon this subject, and confess to you, what I will do to no one else, that my promotion was a mortification to me. In the House of Commons, I may say that I was at the head of business; and I must have continued so, whether I had been in court or out of court. There was, therefore, nothing to flatter my ambition in removing me from thence, but giving me the title which had been many years in my family,* and which reverted to the crown, about a year ago, by the death of the last of the elder house. To make me a peer was no great compliment, when so many others were forced to be made to gain a strength in Parliament; and since the Queen wanted me below stairs in the last session, she could do no less than make me a viscount, or I must have come in the rear of several whom I was not born to follow. Thus far there seems to be nothing done for my sake, or as a mark of favour to me in particular; and yet, farther her Majesty would not go without a force which never shall be used by me. I own to you that I felt more indignation than ever in my life I had done; and the only consideration which kept me from running to extremities was that which should have inclined somebody to use me better. I knew that any appearance of breach between myself and the Lord Treasurer would give our common enemies spirit; and that, if I declined serving at this conjuncture, the home part of the business would, at least for some time, proceed but lamely."

Bolingbroke, in his celebrated letter to Sir William Wyndham, refers, in no less eloquent language, to the unworthy treatment which he had experienced at the hands of his early friend. After haughtily recapitulating the services which he had performed for his party, and showing how much the success, which had attended their measures, was the result of his personal exertions, he proceeds :— " I was dragged into the House of Lords in such a manner as to make my promotion a punishment, not a reward, and was there left to defend the treaties almost alone. It would not have been hard to have forced the Earl of Oxford to use me better. His good intentions began to be very much doubted of. The truth is, no opinion of his sincerity had ever taken root in the party ; and (which was worse, perhaps, for a man in his station) the opinion of his capacity began to fall apace. In the House of Commons his credit was low, and my reputation very high. You know the nature of that assembly ; they grow, like hounds, fond of the man who shows them game, and by whose halloo they are used to be encouraged. The thread of the negotiations, which could not stand still a moment without going back, was in my hands ; and before another man could have made himself master of the business, much time would have been lost, and great inconveniences would have followed. Some, who opposed the court soon after, began to waver then ; and if I had not wanted the inclination, I should have wanted no help to do mischief. I knew the way of quitting my employments, and of retiring from court, when the service of my party required ; but I could not bring myself up to that resolution when the consequence of it must have been the breaking up of my party, and the distress of the public affairs. I thought my mistress treated me ill; but the sense of that duty which I owed her came in aid of other considerations, and prevailed before my resentment." Bolingbroke afterwards adds, — and his language forcibly conveys the tone of his indignant feelings,— "I began in my heart to renounce the friendship which, till that time, I had preserved inviolable for Oxford. I was not aware of all his treachery, nor of the base and little means which he employed then, and continued to employ afterwards, to ruin me in the opinion of the Queen and everywhere else. I saw, however, that he had no friendship for anybody; and that, with respect to me, instead of having the ability to render that merit which I endeavoured to acquire an addition of strength to himself, it became the object of his jealousy, and a reason for undermining me. In this temper of mind I went on, till the great work of the peace was consummated, and a treaty signed at Utrecht; after which, a new and more melancholy scene for the party, as well as for me, opened itself."

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* The *earldom* of Bolingbroke had recently become extinct by the decease of Paulet St. John, the third Earl, who died unmarried, 17th October, 1711.

By this statement, it would appear that Harley was ready enough to make use of talents of which he was secretly in dread; and, moreover, that instead of rewarding services for which he had so long been a debtor, he adopted the most unfair methods of undermining the credit of his colleague and keeping his abilities in the back-ground. In a word, if we may believe Bolingbroke, the memorable feud between Harley and himself is solely attributable to an unworthy feeling of jealousy on the part of his former friend. Had the latter told his own tale, the version would probably have been a very different one. That Harley, indeed, dreaded the aspiring genius of Bolingbroke, and endeavoured, by every method, to keep him in the subordinate ranks of the administration, instead of exalting him into an equal, is far from an improbable solution of this unworthy squabble. But, from the insight which we possess into the ambitious character of Bolingbroke, and his love of intrigue, we can well believe that, in the great game of ministerial rivalship, the first move was made by himself, and that Harley, perceiving he must either affect the humiliation of a false friend, or consent to his own inevitable disgrace, chose, as was natural, the former alternative.

The history of the rivalship between Harley and Bolingbroke having been related elsewhere, there is no necessity to repeat the details on the present occasion. It is sufficient to say, that Bolingbroke leagued himself with Mrs. Masham, and thus succeeded in procuring Harley's dismissal. The latter quitted office with a prophecy, which, though couched in homely language, proved not the less true:—"*Some of them,*" he said, "*will smart for it.*" Bolingbroke, on the other hand, is said to have been unable to conceal the satisfaction that he felt at the fall of his former friend, and even to have celebrated his victory with an unseemly banquet.*

If Bolingbroke entertained any hopes of succeeding to the post of his defeated enemy; if, as appears unquestionable, his intrigues centred principally in this object; he was destined to be signally disappointed. His triumph, indeed, was of short duration. One of the last acts of Queen Anne's life was to nominate the Duke of Shrewsbury to the appointments of Lord Treasurer, Lord Chamberlain, and Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. This occurred on the 30th of July, 1714, and on the 1st of August the Queen expired.

With the death of Queen Anne expired also all the ambitious hopes and magnificent projects of Bolingbroke. He sunk at once from being the victorious statesman and the admired orator, into the character of a dangerous projector and a ruined politician. His own comment on this extraordinary vicissitude affords, perhaps, the best moral to the tale. To Swift he writes, two days after the death of Anne, — "The Earl of Oxford was removed on Tuesday; the Queen died on Sunday: what a world is this, and how does it banter us!" Unlike his rival, Oxford, however, his genius seemed to rise with the occasion:—"I have lost all," he writes, "by the death of the Queen, but my spirit; and I protest to you that I feel that increase upon me."

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* The party invited by him on the occasion are said to have been Generals Cadogan, Stanhope, and Palmer, Sir William Wyndham, and Craggs. They met at Bolingbroke's London residence in Golden Square.

The accession of George the First to the throne was a death-blow to the hopes of the Tory party in England. The Regency immediately despatched the Earl of Dorset to Hanover, to carry to the Elector the news of his accession, and to attend him on his journey to England. Bolingbroke, at this juncture, would probably have gladly resigned the post of Secretary, but till the arrival of the new King, it was imperative on him to discharge the duties of the office. In the meantime the Regency, with an unworthy triumph, lost no opportunity of mortifying a fallen man. They not only appointed a secretary of their own, —the celebrated Addison,—but also gave directions that all letters addressed to the Secretary of State should be sent to the Secretary of the Regency. Moreover, while the members were engaged in deliberating, Bolingbroke, with his bag of papers in his hand, was compelled to wait every morning in the passage among the servants, where, it is said, there were persons stationed purposely to insult and deride him.

Disinclined as we are to place implicit faith in those professions of philosophy, of which Bolingbroke so often makes a parade in his writings, it is, nevertheless, incumbent upon us to do justice to the equanimity which he displayed at this trying juncture, and to the dignity with which he endured the paltry insolence of his successors.

Although he and his party were regarded in the light of state criminals; though he was avoided as a plague-spot in political circles; though shunned by former friends, and surrounded by a host of powerful enemies; he exhibited a proud bearing, and an apparent consciousness of the rectitude of his motives, which exalted him high above the ignoble malice of those, whose aim it was to humble him to the dust. To Swift he writes, on the 11th of August, 1714, ten days after the death of the Queen,—"Adieu, love me; and love me better, because, after a greater blow than most men have felt, I keep up my spirit; am neither dejected at what has passed, nor apprehensive at what is to come: *meâ virtute me involvo.*" Again, he says in a letter to Lord Strafford:—"For my own part, I doubt not but I have been painted in fine colours to the King. I must trust to my conduct to clear me. I served the Queen to the last gasp as faithfully, as disinterestedly, as zealously as if her life had been good for twenty years, and she had twenty children to succeed her. I do not repent doing so, nor envy those who did otherwise. On the same principle will I serve the King, if he employs me; and if he does not, I will discharge my duty honestly and contentedly in the country, and in the House of Peers."

At length, on the 31st of August, despatches were received from George the First at the Hague, one of which directed a patent to be prepared, conferring the dignity of Prince of Wales on the Electoral Prince, while another ordered the instant dismissal of Bolingbroke from all his employments. He quitted London as soon as the state of his affairs would permit him, but was allowed to remain only a short period unmolested. On the arrival of George the First in England, he received a message to attend at the Secretary's office, in order to be present when the Seals should be removed. This summons he excused himself from obeying, affirming that the ceremony might quite as well be performed by one of the under-secretaries: at the same time he solicited the honour of kissing the King's hand—a request which, as he probably anticipated, was refused.

This honour, which was unhesitatingly denied to Bolingbroke, was awarded, though with a bad grace, to the Earl of Oxford. The latter, who had flattered himself that he was to receive the warmest reception from the new King, and had even made some foolish promises to his friends on the strength of this expected favour, had hastened, immediately on the King's landing at Greenwich, to catch the first rays of the rising sun. The reception which he met with was humiliating in the extreme; and we may observe, that though there existed an almost fraternal community of suffering between Bolingbroke and himself; though it was of the utmost importance, not only for their joint interests, but in all probability for the preservation of their lives and fortunes, that they should unite in the same cause, and adopt the same line of defence against the impending attack of their enemies; yet so stedfast was Bolingbroke in his hatred of his rival, that the signal mortification of Oxford, at Greenwich, appears almost to have made amends to him for his personal misfortunes. Speaking of the discomfiture of his former colleague, he says;—"The King began his reign, in this instance, by punishing the ingratitude, the perfidy, and the insolence which had been shown to his predecessors. Oxford fled from court covered with shame,—the object of the derision of the Whigs, and of the indignation of the Tories." Again, he says, in his letter to Sir William Wyndham,—"I abhorred Oxford to that degree, that I could not bear to be joined with him in any case." These passages require no comment. They are the last mention we shall have to make of a political quarrel; one of the most important, in its results, of any recorded in modern history.

In the meantime, such documents as had reference to the recent negotiations for peace, were carefully collected by the government; and a committee, consisting of twenty persons, was appointed to select such passages from them, as might best serve as articles of accusation against the late ministry. Not even the private papers of the deceased Queen were held sacred against the rage of party; and it was evident, from this stretch of power, as well as from the fury with which the persecution was conducted, that England was no longer a safe residence for Bolingbroke. He himself informs us:—"In the King's first speech from the throne, all the inflaming hints were given, all the methods of violence were chalked out to the two Houses. The first steps in both were perfectly answerable, and to the shame of the peerage be it spoken, I saw at that time several lords concur to condemn in one general vote, all that they had approved of in a former parliament by many particular resolutions. Among several bloody resolutions proposed and agitated at this period, the resolution of impeaching me of high treason was taken." Threatened with this imminent danger; with little likelihood of being allowed a fair field in which to defend himself; and assured that his enemies would unscrupulously pursue him to the scaffold, the only hope of safety remaining to him was flight.

The circumstances of his escape render it not a little interesting. After commenting in all circles on the elaborate defence which it was his intention to make, he appeared publicly, on the night of the 25th of March, 1715, at Drury Lane theatre, and, at the close of the performance,—bespoke a particular play for the ensuing night. From the theatre he proceeded to his own house, where he disguised himself in a large coat and black wig, and in the character of a servant of a M. La Vigne, one of the messengers of the French King, proceeded to Dover, from whence he crossed over in a small vessel to Calais.

One Captain Morgan of the marines, who had been principally instrumental in his flight, was afterwards arrested and examined before the Privy Council; but little was elicited from him beyond what has already been related. There appeared in print, however, a curious letter, by which it seems that Bolingbroke had a narrow escape from the port officers at Dover, who abruptly entered an apartment in which he was anxiously waiting a change of the tide, without, however, suspecting his identity. "No sooner were the officers gone," says the writer, "than they went off in the bay on board the vessel, which was in the road. And now, my lord, whom nobody in the house had seen before, was forced to appear. He had got on a very black wig and a riding-coat, which he buttoned over his wig, and covered the lower part of his face. He carried on his shoulders a pair of leathern bags, and affected a clownish, country air in his walking, though nobody suspected him till he was gone off, and then some of the seamen fancied they knew him. He arrived at Calais about eight o'clock, Sunday night, and there the governor's coach attended him on his arrival, and then the man with the riding-coat and black periwig was known to be the Right Honourable the Lord Bolingbroke. Yesterday, Captain Morgan and the two Galways returned, and finding it was known they had conveyed over my lord, they grew very insolent, and came to poor George Slater, and bullied him, and told him had he not been a common-councilman, they would have whipped him round the market for an informing rogue."

As soon as it was publicly known that Bolingbroke had quitted England, copies of the following letter, the original of which was said to have been addressed to Lord Lansdowne, were carefully handed about the London coffee-houses and other places. The authenticity of this remarkable document was doubted at the time, but it is now known to have been, unquestionably, the production of Lord Bolingbroke's pen.

"Dover, 27th March, 1715,

"MY LORD,

"I left the town so abruptly, that I had no time to take leave of you or any of my friends. You will excuse me when you know that I had certain and repeated informations, from some who are in the secret of affairs, that a resolution was taken by those who have power to execute it to pursue me to the scaffold. My blood was to have been the cement of a new alliance, nor could my innocence be any security, after it had once been demanded from abroad, and resolved on at home, that it was necessary to cut me off. Had there been the least reason to hope for a fair and open trial, after having been already prejudged unheard by two Houses of Parliament, I should not have declined the strictest examination; I challenge the most inveterate of my enemies, to produce any one instance of a criminal correspondence, or the least corruption of any part of the administration in which I was concerned. If my zeal for the honour and dignity of my royal mistress and the true interests of my country, has anywhere transported me to let slip a warm or unguarded expression, I hope the most favourable interpretation will be put upon it. It is a comfort that will remain with me in all my misfortunes, that I served her Majesty faithfully and dutifully, in that especially which she had most at heart, relieving her people from a bloody and expensive war; and that I have also been too much an Englishman to sacrifice the interest of my country to any foreign ally; and it is for this crime only that I am now driven from thence. You shall hear more largely from me shortly,

"Yours, &c."

This spirited appeal was affected to be regarded by his enemies as a gross insult to the two houses of Parliament, and, moreover, his flight was construed into evidence of, what they were pleased to call, his guilt. The preparations for his impeachment were hurried with increased alacrity; scarcely a voice was raised in his favour in either house of Parliament; those whom he had formerly silenced by his eloquence, or galled by his sarcasms, now furiously pressed on the absent statesman; and it was evident, that though his enemies had been defrauded of the blood of their arch-enemy, they were determined to pursue him to his irremediable ruin.

CHAPTER III.

The Whigs attempt to prejudice the King against the Tories. —Walpole, afterwards Sir Robert, chairman of the secret committee against St. John, presents the report of the committee to the House of Commons.—Nature of the charges against St. John.—Walpole formally impeaches St. John of high treason.—His violent speech on the occasion.—Its effect on the House of Commons.—Mr. Hungerford and General Ross attempt St. John's defence.—The latter's embarrassment. —Remarks on the charges against St. John.—He is degraded from his nobility, and sentenced to death should he return to England.—Strong protest in the Lords against these penalties.—Bill passes the Lords and receives the Royal assent.—Remarks on the charge against St. John of having made treasonable overtures to the Stuarts.—St. John's forlorn condition in France.—He is visited by an emissary of the Pretender, and accepts the Seals under that prince.—His first interview with him.—St. John's promise to Lord Stair, and violation of it.—Rebellion of 1715.—St. John's interview with the Pretender at St. Germains.—Is dismissed from his service.—His reply to the charge brought against him, of neglecting to send gunpowder to Scotland.—Letter from Lord Stair to Walpole.—St. John's love intrigues while in France. —French lines on the subject.—Duke of Berwick's testimony to St. John's zeal in the cause of the Pretender.—His second marriage to a niece of Madame de Maintenon.—Curious anecdote of his jealousy of a rival.—Character of his second wife.—His purchase of a small estate near Orleans.—Voltaire's visit to him.

Admitting that the conduct of Bolingbroke as a minister was not altogether blameless, the fact is unquestionable, that he was the victim, rather of party hatred and political expediency, than of his own misconduct. The Whigs, in this country, have generally owed their power to agitation, and it was in the spirit of this principle that, on the accession of George the First to the throne, they were willing that the Tories should commit themselves by making some rash attempt in favour of the Pretender, in order that, by the suppression of some popular outbreak, (the importance of which they would probably have greatly exaggerated,) they might win the confidence and ensure the gratitude of the new King. Failing in this object, the next alternative of the Whigs was to prejudice the King by every possible means against the Tory party, and to exhibit their zeal by an open persecution of their enemies.

The chairman of the secret committee, which had been appointed to collect charges against Bolingbroke, was Robert Walpole, afterwards the celebrated Whig minister, who, having formerly been expelled the House of Commons, principally at the instigation of the proscribed statesman, was well qualified, from the personal dislike which he entertained towards his political opponent, to act with all desirable severity and vindictiveness. Accordingly, on the 2nd June, 1715, Walpole presented the report of the committee to the House of Commons. Owing to the zeal of the committee, or rather to their fixed resolution to search out the slightest incident which might reflect on the conduct of

Bolingbroke, the report had consumed two months in drawing up, and now occupied as many as six hours in reading. The charges, on which the impeachment was founded, consisted of six articles, and were as follow:—"That whereas the Lord Bolingbroke had assured the Dutch ministers, that the Queen, his mistress, would make no peace but in concert with them, yet he had sent Mr. Prior to France that same year, with proposals for a treaty of peace with that monarch, without the consent of the allies:—That he advised and promoted the making a separate treaty of convention with France, which was signed in September:—that he disclosed to M. Mesnager, the French minister at London, this convention, which was the preliminary instruction to her Majesty's plenipotentiaries at Utrecht:—that her Majesty's final instructions to her plenipotentiaries were disclosed by him to the Abbot Gaultier, who was an emissary from France:—that he disclosed to the French the manner how Tournay, in Flanders, might be gained by them:—and, lastly, that he advised and promoted the yielding up Spain and the West Indies to the Duke of Anjou, then an enemy to her Majesty."

After the report had been read a second time, Walpole stood up in the House of Commons, and formally impeached Henry, Lord Viscount Bolingbroke, of high treason and other high crimes and misdemeanours. He then burst out into an overwhelming tirade of eloquence and bitterness, in which he drew the character of his political opponent as that of a corrupt minister and unprincipled traitor, and magnified his misdemeanour with all the power of genius, and all the acrimony of inveterate hatred. This celebrated speech was succeeded by a silence which lasted several minutes. To the disgrace of human nature, two voices only were raised in behalf of that great genius, whose transcendent eloquence had, but a few weeks before, excited the spontaneous acclamations of that same assembly,—consisting of the very same members; —and who had recently driven his present accuser from its walls by a display of oratory more brilliant than his own.

But *two* persons, it has been remarked, stood up in favour of Bolingbroke, and their defence was as useless to the exile as it was honourable to themselves. The first speaker was a Mr. Hungerford, who, without attempting the advocacy of Bolingbroke's principles or conduct, confined himself to the plain fact, that there was nothing in the charges which had hitherto been adduced, that by any possibility could be construed into the crime of high treason. He was followed by General Ross, a personal friend of Bolingbroke. When he stood up, the eyes of the whole house were fixed upon him, and this circumstance, added to the novelty of the situation in which he was placed, is said to have wholly deprived him of the power of utterance. Remaining in this embarrassed position for some time, he at length muttered a few words, expressing his wonder that no one better qualified should be found to advocate the cause of his friend, and adding that he would reserve what he had to say for a better opportunity. The emotion exhibited by the old soldier, and his speechless, though expressive, appeal in favour of an absent friend, are said to have had an effect on the house which could scarcely have been produced by a torrent of eloquence; and when he sat down, it was amidst the spontaneous cheers of the united assembly. "It is strange," he said to a person near him, "that I cannot speak for him, when I would so willingly fight for him."

The charges preferred against Bolingbroke in the House of Commons, are so entirely in the spirit of party, that, to have induced them to arrive at their prejudiced decisions, it must have required the grossest servility from one portion of the House, and the most furious enmity on the part of the other. That Bolingbroke, during the complicated and most difficult negotiations connected with the treaty of Utrecht, and with the variety of interests which he had to consult, may not, in every individual point, have carried out his instructions in their exact spirit;—that he adopted measures which the emergency of the occasion could alone justify,—and, moreover, that, in particular points, there were grounds for accusing him of not having properly supported the interests of England, or kept strict faith with her allies, are facts which it would be difficult to disprove. On the other hand, there is not the slightest ground for accusing him of intentional dishonesty, and even had all the charges brought against him been distinctly proved, they could not legally have amounted to high treason.

Moreover, admitting that offences had been committed against the state, it was not Bolingbroke individually who was to blame, but the Tory party in general, and the House of Commons who had solemnly and distinctly approved the proceedings. When Sir William Wyndham subsequently reminded the house that the late peace had been sanctioned by two successive parliaments, and had been declared by them to be a safe, advantageous, and honourable one, he answered every argument that could be adduced against Bolingbroke's conduct. "Though a subsequent parliament," added Wyndham, "may annul any laws which a former parliament has decreed, yet it cannot and ought not to call any ministers to justice, for measures which have been sanctioned by the three branches of the legislature." These arguments, however, had little weight with the House of Commons. They passed a bill, summoning Bolingbroke to appear before their tribunal on a certain day, and, in default, attainted him of high treason. Their summons being, of course, disregarded, he was formally declared to be degraded from his nobility, to be attainted in blood, and disqualified from inheriting the estates of his family, and, finally, he was condemned to suffer death on the scaffold should he ever again set foot in his native country. Notwithstanding a strong protest, the bill which awarded these severe penalties passed the House of Lords, and eventually received the royal assent.

There was one crime laid to the account of Bolingbroke, which was, of course, regarded by his Whig persecutors as the blackest in the catalogue of his political offences: we allude to the charge, which has been so often and so confidently brought against him, of having entertained an intention of restoring the Stuart dynasty, and, with this purpose, of having invited the Pretender to return to England on the death of Queen Anne. We have certainly no desire to enter into the merits of a difficult controversy, which has been often and ably discussed. It is necessary, however, to observe, that, as this charge is omitted in the articles of impeachment, his enemies must have failed in procuring evidence to substantiate it. One or two vague conjectures, indeed, and an ingenious interpretation of some questionable documents, constitute the unsatisfactory and sole presumption of his guilt. Had he ever in reality made any treasonable overtures to the exiled family, the proofs could scarcely have escaped the vindictive industry of Walpole, and the rigorous investigation of the secret committee. But even had they chanced to have eluded so searching an inquisition, we, who live in later times, must have discovered the missing evidence, either from the Stuart Papers, or from other literary emporiums to which posterity has had access.

If the fortunes of Bolingbroke were on the decline in England, his position in France was as little to be envied. Nothing, indeed, could be more lamentable, or adapted more strikingly to illustrate the instability of human greatness, than the situation to which the once powerful Bolingbroke was now reduced. Deserted by his friends and flatterers, and stripped of his rank, fortune, and political power, he found himself an almost impoverished exile in that very country, where, but a few months before, he had been caressed by the King, followed by the acclamations of thousands in whatever town he passed through, and universally courted by the nobles, equally for his wit and celebrity as a man of genius, as from his being the minister of the most powerful kingdom in the world.

Added to the misery of self-reflection, the misfortunes of exile, and the inconveniences of a very restricted income, Bolingbroke, about this period, was laid prostrate on a bed of sickness on the banks of the Rhone. It was in this unhappy condition that he received a visit from an emissary of the Pretender, who was then residing, with his small court, at Barr. The arguments of this unexpected visitor, or rather the exaggerated picture which he drew of the prosperous condition of his master's affairs, would probably have had but little weight with such a mind as Bolingbroke's, had he not been predisposed to listen to the persuasions of the tempter, from the feelings of resentment which rankled in his mind. The personal character of the Pretender he ever affected to despise; but, as he himself tells us, "the smart of a bill of attainder tingled in every vein." His decision was soon made. He hastened to the heir of the Stuarts, who had now removed to Commercy, and with a heart panting for revenge and retribution, accepted the Seals under that unhappy prince.

The step adopted by Bolingbroke on this occasion must not only be regarded as a blot on his character, but reflects very disparagingly on his common sense. This was the view which was afterwards entertained by Bolingbroke himself of his own conduct. His heart seems to have failed him in the first act of the drama, and he admits that the first conversation which he held with his new master convinced him of the unworthiness of the man whose cause he had adopted, and how desperate was the undertaking in which he had so rashly embarked. Speaking of their first interview, he says, "He talked to me like a man who expected every moment to set out for England or Scotland, but who did not very well know for which; and when he entered into the particulars of his affairs, I found that, concerning the former, he had nothing more circumstantial nor positive to go upon than what I had already heard." Bolingbroke further informs us, that when he accepted the Seals from the exiled Prince, feeling himself both averse to, and unfit for, the service, he extorted a promise from his new master, that, at the termination of their present engagement, he should be free to return to a private condition, whether the result should be success or defeat.

On his arrival in France, Bolingbroke had made a solemn promise to the English ambassador, the Earl of Stair, that he would enter into no engagements with the exiled Prince: the fact, therefore, of his breaking that promise must ever be regarded as a stain upon his memory. It has been advanced, indeed, in justification of his conduct, that the pledge was given voluntarily, and with the view of serving his friends in England. Morality, however, must be at a low ebb, when falsehood, under any circumstances, shall be deemed exempt from reprehension. The apologies offered for Bolingbroke form but a frail defence against the arguments of his enemies; and, among the subsequent regrets with which he could not fail to review his past conduct, the recollection of his having broken a solemn contract was, probably, not the least bitter.

The history of the fatal and ill-judged rebellion of 1715, and the downfal of the hopes of the Stuarts, requires neither recapitulation nor comment. If any one could have retrieved the affairs of the Pretender, or materially assisted in re-instating him on the throne of his ancestors, that one would have been Bolingbroke. But so little caution had been exercised, and so many individuals had been entrusted with the secrets of the exiled court, that Bolingbroke had the mortification to find all his intrigues counteracted by the blunders or treachery of his own party, and to learn that the English ministers were as intimately acquainted with their proceedings as were the Jacobites themselves.

On the return of the Pretender from his rash expedition to Scotland, all the weight of his resentment fell on Bolingbroke. Probably, he really suspected the fidelity of his new Secretary, for, otherwise, by his unaccountable conduct, he ran the risk of being charged with the grossest ingratitude, without any adequate advantage resulting to his own cause. Bolingbroke, it seems, had an interview with him at St. Germains, on which occasion they met and parted with every appearance of cordiality. "No Italian," says Bolingbroke, "ever embraced the man he was going to stab with greater show of affection and confidence." On taking leave of the Prince, the latter inquired of Bolingbroke how long it would be before he followed him, and, at the same time, gave him some trifling commissions to execute in his absence.

The next morning, Bolingbroke received a visit from the Duke of Ormond, who presented him with a slip of paper, in the Pretender's own hand-writing, intimating that he had no longer any occasion for his services, and directing him to give up the papers in the Secretary's office. These papers, according to Bolingbroke, might have been contained in a letter-case of a moderate size. It has been remarked, as a singular circumstance, that within the short space of twelve-months, Bolingbroke should have held the appointment of Secretary of State both to Queen Anne, and the Pretender, and that in each case his dismissal from office should have been followed by an attainder.

The manner in which Bolingbroke was treated by his new master, was certainly as little deserved as had been his previous impeachment in England. Many stories are related as to the true cause of his dismissal, but as the majority of them are improbable, and several of them absurd,—and, moreover, as Bolingbroke himself never thought them worthy of refutation,—it is scarcely necessary to do more than refer to them. The only charge which Bolingbroke himself condescended to answer, was an accusation of intentional dilatoriness in sending gunpowder to Scotland. Even this charge he could only be induced to reply to through his secretary, and in the following haughty and characteristic manner:

"The Earl of Mar and the others who came from Scotland, are so much in want of an excuse for their flight, that they have thought fit to have my Lord Bolingbroke discharged the Chevalier's service in the most abrupt and injurious manner, under the pretence that the want of powder, which he delayed to send, forced them to abandon Scotland.

"His Lordship says publicly, first, that he is able to prove that if they wanted powder, it was not by his fault.

"Secondly,—That according to what the Chevalier and Earl of Mar both say in their letters, they must have come away as they did, had they had all the powder in France.

"Thirdly,—That if they had pleased to have stayed in Scotland a few days longer, they would have received near ten thousand arms, and near thirty thousand weight of powder, and other stores in proportion.

"And, lastly, that the true reason flows from another source; and that he knew and spoke of the design to discard him long before the want of powder was so much as talked of. That he is unwilling to enter into particulars of those general heads, for reasons that may be easily guessed, since he is persuaded that he shall neither pass for a traitor nor a driveller among his friends."

There is extant a curious letter, dated the 3rd March, 1716, from the Earl of Stair, the English Ambassador at Paris, to the elder Horace Walpole, in which the gossip of the French capital, on the subject of Bolingbroke's dismissal, is thus referred to: "The true Jacobite project has been at last discovered, and they imagined nobody would tell it but Bolingbroke, who they have, as they now say, clearly discovered has all along betrayed them; and so poor Harry is turned out from being Secretary of State, and the Seals are given to Mar; and they use poor Harry most unmercifully, and call him knave and traitor, and God knows what. I believe all poor Harry's fault was, that he could not play his part with a grave enough face; he could not help laughing, now and then, at such Kings and Queens. He had a mistress here at Paris, and got drunk now and then, and he spent the money upon his mistress that he should have bought powder with, and neglected buying and sending the powder and the arms, and never went near the Queen, and, in one word, told Lord Stair all their designs, and was had out of England for that purpose. I would not have you laugh, Mr. Walpole, for all this is very serious. For the rest, they begin now to apprehend that their King is unlucky, and that the westerly winds and Bolingbroke's treason, have defeated the finest project that ever was laid."*

One circumstance, which is more than hinted at by Lord Stair, is not at all improbable, that Bolingbroke's love of the ridiculous carried him beyond all bounds, and that in moments of social hilarity, he indulged in ludicrous comments on his own pretensions and those of his master.

After all, Bolingbroke appears to have been influenced in a less degree by interested considerations than any other minister at the Pretender's court; and a manifest proof of this assertion is the fact, that while others were draining the ill-supplied coffers of the little court of St. Germains for their own use, he himself exhausted in his master's service the greater part of the money which he had saved from the wreck of his fortunes.

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* Walpole Papers; Coxe's Life of Walpole, vol. ii. p. 307.

The evidence of the celebrated Duke of Berwick,—a man who was as little likely to be prejudiced in favour of Bolingbroke, as he was capable of telling an untruth,—is alone sufficient to establish the innocence of the disgraced secretary. The Duke, after speaking of the dismissal of Bolingbroke, by his half-brother, the Pretender, as "an enormous blunder," proceeds, "I was in part a witness how he acted for King James, whilst he managed his affairs, and I owe him the justice to say, that he left nothing undone of what he could do. He moved heaven and earth to obtain supplies, but was always put off by the court of France; and though he saw through their pretexts and complained of them, yet there was no other power to which he could apply."

After quitting the service of the Pretender, Bolingbroke passed a few months in the French capital, where his literary reputation and conversational powers procured for him the friendship and admiration of the French *savans*, at a period when an illustrious assemblage of talent rendered the close of the reign of Louis the Fourteenth the Augustan era of France.

Notwithstanding his accumulated misfortunes, Bolingbroke continued to maintain his reputation of being a man of gallantry, and to mingle the pursuit of pleasure with graver avocations and tastes. He formed a connection with the beautiful Madame Tencin, so celebrated for her love of gallantry and her taste for political intrigues; and, subsequently, maintained as his acknowledged mistress a young girl who had made her escape from a convent. From the memoirs of Elizabeth-Charlotte, Duchess of Orleans, we learn that his intrigue with this unfortunate female afforded considerable amusement to the fashionable circles of Paris, and that the following verses on the subject were much in vogue at that period:

"Bolingbroke, es-tu possédé?
Quel est ton désir chimérique,
De t'amuser à chevaucher
La fille de Saint-Dominique?
Crois-tu que d'elle et d'un Torris
Il en puisse naître l'anti-christ?
Penses-tu donc plaire au régent,
En suivant toujours cette guenipe?
Il l'a ratée, il y a trois ans,
Il a juré par Saint-Philippe,
Qu'il méprisera tout mortel
Sacrifiant à cet autel."

According to the Duchess, it was believed by many persons that the young girl, notwithstanding her frailty, continued a *religieuse* at heart. "But," adds the Duchess, "she had long run after my own son, without, however, being successful in the pursuit." Bolingbroke formed, about the same time, an acquaintance with a beautiful and accomplished woman, who, on the death of Lady Bolingbroke, two years afterwards, became his second wife. This lady was Mary Clara Des Champs de Marsilly, widow of the Marquis de Villette, and a niece of Madame de Maintenon. Madame de Villette was surrounded by a host of admirers, and as it was not in Bolingbroke's power to make her his wife, the circumstance that she was free to confer her hand upon another, seems to have occasioned him inexpressible pain.

Among his rivals was a handsome Scotch adventurer of the name of M'Donald, who held a high appointment in the service of the Pretender. We mention this person, because the jealousy with which Bolingbroke regarded his attentions to Madame de Villette hurried him, at least on one occasion, to very indecorous lengths. One day, indeed, at the table of the Marchioness, he attempted to inflict personal chastisement on his rival. On the occasion referred to, he rose from his seat in a moment of ungovernable passion, and, in making his way towards the offender, upset the table at which the company were seated, and fell prostrate among the broken dishes. One of the guests, the Marquis de Matignon, for the time, assuaged his angry feelings; but his jealousy is said to have, afterwards, frequently broken out, at any attention paid by his rival to the object of their mutual regard.

The death of Lady Bolingbroke occurred in

November, 1718, and in May, 1720, Bolingbroke was privately married to the Marchioness de Villette. It was a step which he never had occasion to repent. By her lively manners, her affectionate disposition, and forbearing temper, the Marchioness rendered herself necessary to his happiness, and, probably, appeared the more charming from the fact of his first wife having been an object of indifference and even of dislike. She entered into his literary tastes, was a sharer of his political prejudices, was indulgent to his errors, and appreciated, and was proud of, his genius. Moreover, she was possessed of a considerable fortune, which, in the present state of Bolingbroke's finances and with his expensive tastes and habits, was a circumstance of the first importance to him. Intent on accommodating herself to all her husband's necessities, she was even complaisant enough to profess herself of the Reformed religion. This also was an important object to Bolingbroke, for had it been known in England that he had united himself to a Roman Catholic, the circumstance would, unquestionably, have been fatal to his hopes of obtaining a pardon.

Shortly before his marriage, Bolingbroke had purchased a small estate, called La Source, near Orleans, where henceforward he resided till the period of his recall. The spot was a beautiful one; the taste which he displayed in its adornment is said to have been exquisite, and his hospitality unbounded. In a letter to Swift, he styles it his "hermitage," and speaking of the small river Loiret, which took its source close to his chateau, he says, "I have in my wood the biggest and clearest spring in Europe, which forms, before it leaves the park, a more beautiful river than any which flows in Greek or Latin verse." It was one of his fancies, at this period, to adorn his house and grounds with such inscriptions, as either had reference to the circumstances of his exile, or to the equanimity with which he professed to endure his misfortunes. One inscription, in particular,—which he placed over the portico of his house,—is worthy of being recorded. If it really spoke the sentiments of his mind, it would have been creditable to the principles of a Stoic philosopher.*

The retreat of Bolingbroke at La Source was frequently resorted to by the first men of genius from the French capital. Among those who enjoyed the hospitality of the exile was Voltaire, then a young man, who, to the close of his long life, spoke enthusiastically of the enchanting visits which he paid to "*Milord Bolingbroke et Madame de Villette.*" Referring to the former, he says, in a letter to Teriot, "*J'ai trouvé dans cet*

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* The inscription here alluded to is as follows:—"Si resipiscat patria, in patriam rediturus. Si non resipiscat, ubivis melius quam inter tales cives futurus: hanc villam instauro et exorno: hinc, velut ex portu, alienos casus et fortunæ ludum insolentem cernere suave est. Hîc, mortem nec appetens nec timens, innocuis deliciis, doctâ quiete et felicis animi immotâ tranquilitate, fruiscor. Hîc mihi vivam quod super est aut exilii aut ævi."

illustre Anglais tout l'érudition de son pays et toute la politesse du nôtre." Bolingbroke, it may be remarked, is said to have given some of the last touches to the "Henriade," which Voltaire had just finished.

CHAPTER IV.

St. John obtains a pardon in 1723.—Bribes the Duchess of Kendal.—His attainder still in force.—His return to England.—Again interferes in political intrigues.—Walpole's hatred of him.—Restored to his family inheritance through the influence of the Duchess of Kendal.—Walpole reluctantly supports the bill in the Commons.—St. John's memorial respecting the incapacity of Walpole privately presented to the King by the Duchess of Kendal.—The King shows it to Walpole.—St. John's interview with the King.—St. John's sanguine hopes of supplanting Walpole.—Death of the King fatal to his hopes. — He retires to Dawley. — His affected love of retirement. — Lord Chesterfield's opinion of him.—St. John's contributions to "The Craftsman."—Fall of Walpole.—St. John pays court to the Prince of Wales.—Interesting anecdote.—St. John's hospitality at Dawley.—Retires to France.—His letters to Sir W. Wyndham.—His occupations during his retirement.—Returns to England, and resides with Pope at Twickenham.— Pope's account of St. John's mode of life in France.—St. John finally takes up his abode at Battersea.—Lord Chesterfield's sketch of him in old age.—Declining health of St. John's wife.—Her death in 1750.—St. John attacked by a cancerous humour in the face.—Sufferings occasioned by it.—His death in 1751.—His character by Lord Orrery.—Swift's and Pitt's opinions of his oratory.—His character as a philosophical writer.—Mallet's edition of his works, and Garrick's epigram on it.

At length, in 1723, after an exile of about nine years, Bolingbroke (by means of a bribe of £11,000, which was offered to, and accepted by, the Duchess of Kendal, the German mistress of George the First) obtained a virtual pardon of his political offences. It amounted, however, to little more than a bare permission to return to his native country. The attainder remained in force; his title was still withheld from him; he was rendered incapable of inheriting the family estates, and was precluded alike from resuming his seat in the House of Lords, and from filling any situation under the state.

Bolingbroke's pardon, however, was no sooner known to have passed the Great Seal, than he departed on his journey towards England. Voltaire writes to a friend, "*Une chose qui m'intéresse davantage c'est le rappel de Milord Bolingbroke en Angleterre. Il sera aujourd'hui à Paris, et j'aurai la douleur de lui dire adieu peut-être pour toujours.*" Nearly at the same time that Bolingbroke received his pardon, it is remarkable that Bishop Atterbury was sentenced to banishment by his peers. It is even said that, at the moment when the Bishop set his foot on the pier of Calais, Bolingbroke was on the point of sailing for England. It was a singular coincidence, and escaped not the observation of Atterbury: "Ah," he said, "it is clear that we are exchanged." Pope writes to Swift at this period, "Lord Bolingbroke is now returned, as I hope, to take me, with all his other hereditary rights. It is my ill fate, that all those whom I most loved and with whom I most lived, must be banished. After both of you left England, my constant host was the Bishop of Rochester. Sure, this is a nation which is cursedly afraid of being overrun with too much politeness; and we cannot regain one great genius but at the expense of another."

Bolingbroke had no sooner set his foot in his native land, than, forgetting those philosophical principles which he had so recently professed on the banks of the Loiret, and amidst the shady groves of La Source, he was drawn once more into the vortex of politics, and again contrived to lose himself in a labyrinth of intrigues. Walpole, his former schoolfellow and political antagonist, was, at this period, at the head of the English ministry; and to procure the fall of that celebrated man, all the energies of Bolingbroke's mind were called into play. Probably, in the whole history of political warfare, no two statesmen ever personally regarded each other with a more invincible dislike. When the attainder of Bolingbroke was once referred to in the House of Commons, the mere mention of the name of his detested rival effectually destroyed the equanimity of the good-natured minister. After uttering a volume of invectives against Bolingbroke and his principles, "May his attainder," he added, indignantly, "never be reversed, and may his crimes never be forgotten!"

It has been asserted by Horace Walpole that Bolingbroke was entirely indebted for his recall to Sir Robert. The fact, however, is beyond a question, that the minister retarded in every possible manner, the pardon of his adversary. Walpole, indeed, openly opposed the claims of Bolingbroke both at the Council Board and in Parliament; and it was owing to his personal influence and unwearying exertions that the boon obtained for Bolingbroke by the Duchess of Kendal was confined to a mere permission to live unmolested in England. We have been induced to mention these circumstances, because if Bolingbroke had really been indebted for his pardon to Walpole, his subsequent inveterate opposition to the government of that minister must be regarded in no other light than as an act of the most flagrant ingratitude.

After his return to England, Bolingbroke and the minister met, at least, on one occasion. Walpole even invited him to dinner, and Bolingbroke accepted the invitation. "Bolingbroke," says Horace Walpole, "could not avoid waiting on Sir Robert to thank him, and was invited to dine with him at Chelsea. But, whether tortured at witnessing Walpole's serene frankness, or suffocated with indignation and confusion at being forced to be obliged to one whom he hated and envied, the first morsel he put into his mouth was near choking him, and he was reduced to rise from table, and leave the room for some minutes. I never heard of their meeting more."

Irritated at the constant refusals returned to his applications for a reversal of his attainder; panting once more to enjoy the advantages of political influence and distinction; and stimulated by personal feelings of rivalship and dislike, Bolingbroke set his whole soul at work to destroy the influence of Walpole with the King. As yet the only boon that he had obtained since his return to England was the passing of an Act of Parliament in 1725, which restored him to his family inheritance, and enabled him to make purchases of any real or personal estate within the kingdom. The bill in question was supported by Sir Robert Walpole in the House of Commons; but the minister has himself informed us, that it was entirely against his own inclination that the measure was introduced into Parliament, and that nothing but the express commands of his sovereign would have induced him to give it his sanction or support.

On this occasion, as on a former one, Bolingbroke was indebted to the good offices of the Duchess of Kendal. The imperial courtezan, indeed, appears to have conceived a personal dislike to Walpole, and, either influenced by this feeling, or grateful for the magnificent bribe which she had received at the hands of his enemy, she lost no opportunity of advancing the interests of the latter. She even privately presented to the King a memorial, drawn up by Bolingbroke, in which he insisted on the incapacity of the minister; attributing to him all the presumed misfortunes with which the country was afflicted, and concluding by demanding a personal interview. This interview the King thought proper to grant, though, at the same time, he showed his confidence in Walpole, by handing to him the offensive memorial.

Whatever may have occurred at the singular meeting between George the First and Bolingbroke, so little does the King appear to have been affected by the polished address and insinuating eloquence of the wily statesman; that, when afterwards interrogated as to the substance of their conversation, he indifferently replied,—"Bagatelles, bagatelles!" During the whole time, indeed, that Bolingbroke was closeted with the King, Walpole, it is said, was waiting, quietly and unconcernedly, in the anti-chamber, till the interview should be at an end.

It is to be regretted that the memorial presented by Bolingbroke to George the First, should no longer be in existence. A short time before the death of Sir Robert Walpole, he observed to his son, — "Horace, when I am gone, you will find many curious papers in the drawer of this table." Among these papers was the memorial in question; but, after the death of the minister, it was, unfortunately, nowhere to be found. It was believed by Horace Walpole, either that his elder brother had inadvertently destroyed it, or that it had been abstracted by a steward who was either a virtuoso or a thief.*

It has generally been presumed, that, in the later struggles which took place between Bolingbroke and Walpole, the former had never in reality the remotest chance of expelling his rival, or of installing himself in his room. Etough, in detailing the minutes of a curious conversation

* Coxe's Life of Sir R. Walpole, Preface, p. 23.

which he held with Sir Robert Walpole, observes: — "September 13, 1737, I had an opportunity for full conversation with Sir Robert Walpole. I mentioned then, to him, Bolingbroke's reports of his often attending the late King at supper, and of his interest being so prevailing, that it was with the utmost importunity and address he persuaded the King to defer the making him prime minister, till he returned from Hanover. He condescended to give me this explanation. He said lying was so natural to St. John, that it was impossible for him to keep within the bounds of truth. He might truly boast of his prospects, for they were very great; though things were not so fixed and near as he pretended. He had the entire interest of the Duchess of Kendal, and having this, what consequences time would probably have produced, required no explanation. St. John, he averred, had only been once with the King, which was owing to his importunity."

On this occasion, Etough contents himself with merely repeating the minutes of his conversation with Sir Robert Walpole, but on the other hand, in an unpublished letter to Dr. Birch, we find him expressing himself, fully satisfied of the probability of St. John's ultimate success. "Bolingbroke," he writes, "would have prevailed had the King lived. What fully amounts to this I am sure I had from the late Earl of Oxford. Mr. H. Walpole has warmly rebuked me for this report, but offered nothing solid in the way of contradiction."* The subject, indeed, is more than once adverted to by Horace Walpole in his letters, but so absorbing was his attachment to his father, and so great was his admiration of his talents, that he could be induced to regard it in no other light than as a fantastical chimera.

That Bolingbroke, indeed, trod closely in the steps of his enemy, and that his success at one period, was extremely probable, we cannot for a moment question. In the year 1727, he was openly spoken of as the future minister; the adversaries of Walpole rallied confidently round him; and Bolingbroke himself insisted, that, immediately after the King's return from Hanover, the world would see him first minister. To quote Sir Robert Walpole's own words,—"As St. John had the Duchess entirely on his side, I need not add what must, or might, in time, have been the consequence." Swift, in one of his letters to Dr. Sheridan, expresses his belief that Bolingbroke's triumph was at hand; Atterbury, also, in a memorial addressed to Cardinal Fleury, treats the downfal of Sir Robert as certain; and, moreover, Henry Pelham assured Speaker Onslow, that so convinced was Walpole himself of Bolingbroke's approaching triumph, that it was only owing to the earnest remonstrances of the Duke of Devonshire and the Princess of Wales, that he was prevented from tendering his resignation, and accepting a peerage.

The decease of George the First, however, and the entire confidence extended to Walpole, by the new monarch, were fatal to the expectations and ambitious projects of Bolingbroke. He, accordingly, retired to a seat which he had purchased at Dawley, near Uxbridge, where, affecting the utmost contempt for politics and party, he endeavoured to cheat himself into a belief that he was a very contented philosopher, and that the world and its vanities were beneath his interest or regard.

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* Add. MSS. Brit. Mus. 4326. B.

With Bolingbroke, however, ambition constituted the vital principle of existence, and it was only on occasions when the star of his genius was obscured in the political horizon, that he fell back into the regions of philosophy, and, affecting to be wholly absorbed in the cultivation of letters and the quiet enjoyments of a country life, spoke of retirement as the only source of happiness and the panacea for all human ills. Not that, in his professions of philosophical indifference, and in the glowing pictures which he draws of his classical seclusion, we can accuse him of a strained attempt at dramatic effect, for we find him expatiating on these subjects, not merely in those finished essays which were intended to win the applause of the public, but also in his confidential letters to his most intimate friends. It could only, however, have been in the seclusion of his own closet; in particular moments of self-approbation; or when thwarted in his ambitious views; that he flattered himself he was superior to the common weaknesses of mankind, and that the honours and rewards to be gained by a communion with his fellows, were beneath the notice of a philosopher and a man of letters. But, no sooner did the moment for action present itself; no sooner did there appear a prospect of success, than, like the soldier who rouses himself at the familiar sound of the trumpet, he rushed at once into the heart of the contest, and again sought to become a participator in the spoils.

Unquestionably, the actions of Bolingbroke, on more than one occasion, gave the lie to his professions. Lord Chesterfield, who was well acquainted with him, once observed in conversation with a friend: — "Though nobody spoke and wrote better upon philosophy than Lord Bolingbroke, no man in the world had less share of philosophy than himself; that the least trifle, such as the over-roasting of a leg of mutton, would strangely disturb and ruffle his temper; and that his passions constantly got the better of his judgment."* Bolingbroke had already boasted of his philosophy amidst the beautiful solitudes of La Source; but no sooner was it permitted him to return to the scene of his former contests and early splendour, than the scabbard was thrown away in the struggle for distinction; and his philosophy forgotten in the excitement of the fray.

Bolingbroke's political writings at this period, more especially his contributions to the "Craftsman," will ever be read for the closeness of their argument and the bitterness of their invective. Probably, it afforded no slight degree of consolation to his wounded spirit that though unable to build his own fortunes on the ruins of his rival's power, yet that his writings gradually undermined and destroyed the popularity of Walpole, and had the principal share in effecting the downfal of his enemy.

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* Lord Chesterfield's Works, by Dr. Maty, vol. i, p. 283.

At Dawley, Bolingbroke received frequent visits from Pope, Swift, Gay, and other celebrated men, whose genius and writings constituted the Augustan age of England. The wit, the kindness, and the hospitality of Bolingbroke, as well as the charms of his retreat, are constantly referred to in their letters, and, among other encomiums, those of Pope are not the least pleasing. In one of his letters to Swift he says:—" I now hold the pen for my Lord Bolingbroke, who is reading your letter between two haycocks; but his attention is somewhat diverted by casting his eyes on the clouds, not in admiration of what you say, but for fear of a shower. As to the return of his health and vigour, were you here, you might inquire of his hay-makers; but as to his temperance, I can answer, that for one whole day we have had nothing for dinner but mutton-broth, beans and bacon, and a barn-door fowl. Now his Lordship is run after his cart, I have a moment left to myself to tell you, that I overheard him yesterday agree with a painter for two hundred pounds to paint his country-hall with rakes, spades, prongs, and other ornaments, merely to countenance his calling this place a Farm."

Bolingbroke, indeed, did his best to persuade his friends and himself, that he was completely wedded to the quiet pleasures of a country life, and that he had cheerfully bidden adieu to that stormy element on which he had once delighted to ride. In one of his letters to Swift, speaking of his favourite "Farm," he says, — "I have caught hold of the earth (to use a gardener's phrase), and neither my enemies nor my friends will find it an easy matter to transplant me again." Again, over the entrance of his farm was inscribed in prominent letters,—

"SATIS BEATUS RURIS HONORIBUS."

Notwithstanding, however, his vaunted indifference to what was passing in the world, it was professedly owing to the disgust which he conceived at the conduct of his political friends, that, in January, 1735, he retired to France, with the intention of never again returning to his native country. The large majority which Walpole still commanded in the House of Commons, and the repeated refusals of the government to restore him to his seat in the House of Lords, continued to be sources of constant irritation and complaint. Among other and frequent outbreaks of his uneasy spirit, a letter addressed by him at this period to Sir William Wyndham, displays little of the indifference of a Stoic. "I am still," he says, "the same proscribed man, surrounded with difficulties, exposed to mortifications, and unable to take any share in the service, but that which I have taken hitherto, and which, I think, you would not persuade me to take in the present state of things. My part is over, and he who remains on the stage after his part is over, deserves to be hissed off."

The spot fixed upon by Bolingbroke as his new retreat, was a place called Chantelon, near Fontainebleau. Neither his health nor his spirits, however, appear to have benefited by the change. To Sir William Wyndham he writes at the beginning of the following year,—"I have no gout, but I have frequently interruptions of sleep, and great depressions of spirits. I relieve myself, when they first happen, by yielding to them; at whatever hour they take me, I rise, and read, or write, or walk about. I give full employment to this fluttering activity of the spirits. When I cannot have sleep as I would, I take it as I can; and like my brother animals, I recover by snatches in the day, what I lost in the night. They say this method is unwholesome. But if it shortens life in one sense, it prolongs life in another, and a better. We lose time enough in sleep, but to lose any in endeavouring to sleep, is unnecessary profusion. As to the other evil you complained of, lassitude and depression of spirits, temperance, and even abstinence, is the proper remedy, for our spirits flag by repletion." On his screen, at his house at Chantelon, he is said to have inscribed the following verse:—

"Las d'espérer, et de me plaindre
Des Muses, des grands, et du sort,
J'attens ici la mort,
Sans la désirer ou la craindre."

The copy of this inscription was found among the manuscripts of the late George Selwyn, with the following amusing paraphrase by Horace Walpole:—

"Weary of hoping and complaining,
Of things that reign, or should be reigning;
Without a wish, without a tear,
And,—as I'm safe,—without a fear."

The time passed by Bolingbroke at Chantelon appears to have been divided between literary composition and the pleasures of the field. Like Gibbon, he usually wrote in a small pavilion which he had constructed in his garden,* and here he composed his "Letters on the Study of History;" his celebrated "Essay on the Use of Retirement and Study," and other works. Pulteney describes him, at this period, as living at a great expense, and expresses his conviction that he can only look to the death of his father for the means of continuing his profusion. Pulteney adds, that though Lord St. John must be on the verge of ninety, he was far more likely to marry than to die.

Bolingbroke had never been a very prudent manager of his fortune, and it seems to have been owing to the embarrassed state of his affairs that, after a residence of about four years at Chantelon, he was compelled to pay a visit to England. His object was to dispose of his farm at Dawley, which he eventually sold for twenty-six thousand pounds. During the six months that he remained in England, he principally resided with Pope, at Twickenham, enjoying the society of Marchmont, Wyndham, and other friends. Probably it was at this time, that Pope composed those beautiful lines "On his grotto at Twickenham," which have conferred an undying interest on his favourite cave:—

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* The celebrated Buffon, with a similarity of taste, composed in an old tower in his garden.

"Approach, but awful! lo! the Ægerian grot,
Where, nobly pensive, St. John sat and thought;
Where British sighs from dying Wyndham stole,
And the bright flame was shot through Marchmont's soul.
Let such, such only, tread this sacred floor,
Who dare to love their country, and be poor."

Again, the poet exclaims in one of his Imitations of Horace:—

"There, my retreat the best companions grace,
Chiefs out of war, and statesmen out of place.
There St. John mingles with my friendly bowl,
The feast of reason and the flow of soul."

In one of his letters to Swift, Pope, (who probably received the following account from Bolingbroke's own lips,) gives an interesting description of the philosopher's mode of living in France. "Lord Bolingbroke's plan of life is now a very agreeable one; in the finest country of France, divided between study and exercise,—for he still reads or writes five or six hours a day, and hunts generally twice a week. He has the whole forest of Fontainebleau at his command, with the King's stables and dogs. His lady's son-in-law being governor of that place, she resides most part of the year with my Lord at a large house they have hired, and the rest with her daughter, who is abbess of a royal convent in the neighbourhood. I never saw him in stronger health, or in better humour with his friends, or more indifferent or dispassionate as to his enemies." Among the letters from Bolingbroke to Wyndham, preserved with the Egremont papers at Petworth, the greater number are said to contain directions for sending him out pointers to Fontainebleau, and to be principally occupied with allusions to the sports of the field. Bolingbroke had never been indifferent to the pleasures of the country. Swift, in recording a visit which he paid him in 1711, observes,—"Mr. Secretary was a perfect country-gentleman at Buckleberry: he smoked tobacco with one or two neighbours; he inquired after the wheat in such a field; he went to visit his hounds, and knew all their names: he and his lady saw me to my chamber just in the country fashion."*

From the period that Walpole was driven from power, Bolingbroke ceased to distinguish himself as a party writer, and thus, after a contention of nearly half a century, terminated the great struggle between these celebrated men. Though Bolingbroke no longer bore a prominent part in the politics of the day, his ambitious spirit was certainly far from being at rest, and, even at the age of seventy, we find him entertaining a scheme of future greatness, by courting the favour of Frederick, Prince of Wales. "The court he paid the Prince," says Horace Walpole, "was to a degree of adoration. One day that he dined with Lord Egmont, the Prince came in as they were drinking coffee, and bade them not mind him. Lord Egmont, who knew that to obey was respect, gave Lord Bolingbroke a dish; but he, who thought that to disobey from respect, was more respectful, (and who, perhaps, knew, that though the Prince seemed to encourage familiarity, he never forgave it,) started up, and cried,—'Good God! my Lord, what are you doing? Do you consider who is present?'" The first interview between the Prince and Lord Bolingbroke had been a secret one. Lord Bolingbroke happened to be first to arrive at the place of rendezvous, and was engaged in glancing over the leaves of a book, when the Prince suddenly entered the apartment. In his hurry to show the respect due to royalty, Bolingbroke's foot slipped, and, had not the Prince held out his hand to support him, he would have fallen to the ground. "My Lord," was the Prince's happy observation;—'I trust this may be an omen of my succeeding in raising your fortunes."

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* Journal to Stella, August 4, 1711.

On the death of his father, in 1742, Bolingbroke, having become possessed of the family estates, hastened to take up his residence at the ancient seat of the St. Johns at Battersea. Here, with the exception of two short visits to the continent, he spent the remainder of his eventful life. Henceforward, as far as professions and appearances can be trusted, we find him in reality wedded to a life of seclusion, and conscientiously acting up to, and benefiting by, those precepts of philosophy, the consolations of which he had hitherto only *professed* to feel.

More real afflictions than a mere exclusion from political power, were gathering fast round the declining statesman, and it required all his boasted fortitude to sustain him against their attacks. His health had latterly become sadly shattered; he suffered the most excruciating agonies from repeated attacks of rheumatism; and in addition to these bodily infirmities, he had the misfortune to see the friends of his youth,—those gifted minds with whom he had mingled in social intercourse for so many years,—hurried off, one by one, to the grave. Pope, Swift, Prior, Gay, Atterbury, and Wyndham were no more, and the once-envied Bolingbroke found himself sick and almost alone amidst a strange generation; bewailing, in his solitude, the loss of old friends, without the power or, perhaps, the inclination of acquiring new. Nevertheless, the solitude of Battersea was a splendid one; his society was as much courted in the decline of life as it had been at its outset, and the few whom he admitted to the circle of his acquaintance, comprised the most distinguished individuals of the age.

Among those with whom, at the close of life, Lord Bolingbroke formed an intimacy, was the celebrated Philip Dormer, Earl of Chesterfield, from whose pen we possess more than one interesting notice of the illustrious recluse. The latter writes to his son in the month of November, 1749:—"Lord Bolingbroke joins to the deepest erudition the most elegant politeness and good breeding that ever any courtier or man of the world was adorned with. Pope very justly calls him the—'all-accomplished St. John,' with regard to his knowledge and his manners. He had, it is true, his faults, which proceeded from unbounded ambition, and impetuous passions; but they have now subsided by age and experience; and I can wish you nothing better than to be what he is *now*, without being what he has been formerly." Again Lord Chesterfield writes to his son on the 12th of December following:—"Lord Bolingbroke has both a tongue and a pen to persuade; his manner of speaking in private conversation is full as elegant as his writings; whatever subject he either speaks or writes upon, he adorns it with the most splendid eloquence; not a studied or laboured eloquence, but such a flowing happiness of diction, which (from care, perhaps, at first) is become so habitual to him, that even his most familiar conversations, if taken down in writing, would bear the press, without the least correction either as to method or style. If his conduct in the former part of his life had been equal to all his natural and acquired talents, he would most justly have merited the epithet of 'all-accomplished.' He is himself sensible of his past errors; those violent passions which seduced him in his youth, have now subsided by age; and take him as he is now, the character of 'all-accomplished' is more his due than any man's I ever knew in my life." Such is the light in which Lord Chesterfield places the character of Bolingbroke at the close of his memorable career. Lord Chesterfield was too acute an observer of human nature to be deceived by mere empty professions of philosophical content, and, moreover, as these flattering eulogiums were never intended to meet the public eye, the truth of the picture may confidently be relied upon.

But the misfortune which seems to have principally weighed on the spirits of Bolingbroke, was the declining health of his lady; a calamity which apparently affected him far more deeply than any sufferings of his own. For many years her existence had been a precarious one, but now, broken down by repeated attacks of indisposition, it was evident that the catastrophe so long dreaded by her husband was at hand. The affection with which Bolingbroke never failed to regard his second wife, and the tender solicitude with which he watched over her sufferings, cannot but be regarded as redeeming traits in his character. To the Earl of Marchmont he writes from London, in February, 1750, about a month before his wife's decease,—"It is true that I have been these two months in this town, much out of order myself, and yet not on my own account, but on that of a poor woman, who is come, I think, to die here. It is impossible to describe the torment she has endured these many months, and the weakness to which she is reduced by a slow but almost continued fever at this time. A man, who thinks and feels as I do, can find no satisfaction in the present scene; and I am about to lose one who is the comfort of my life in all the melancholy scenes of it, just at a time when the present is most likely to continue and to grow daily worse."* Lady Bolingbroke died on the 18th of March, 1750, and was buried in the vault of the St. Johns at Battersea, where a tribute paid by her husband to her many virtues may still be seen within the walls of the church.

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* Horace Walpole, who detested the very name of Bolingbroke, in a letter to Sir Horace Mann, dated April 2, 1750, thus heartlessly refers to Bolingbroke's bereavement:—"My Lord Bolingbroke has lost his wife. *When she was dying he acted grief; flung himself upon her bed and asked her if she could forgive him.*" This passage is strongly characteristic of the cold heart and envenomed pen of Horace Walpole; for that the grief of Bolingbroke was sincere, there can be no question. Walpole, however, at the same time that he stigmatizes the husband, records a pleasing anecdote of the wife;—"I never saw her, but have heard her wit and parts excessively commended. Dr. Middleton told me a compliment she made him two years ago, which I thought pretty. She said she was persuaded that he was a very great writer, for she understood his works better than any other English book, and that she had observed that the best writers were always the most intelligible."—*Walpole's Letters*, vol. ii. pp. 327, 328.

Bolingbroke, in addition to other bodily ailments, had recently been attacked by a new and formidable disorder, a cancerous humour in his face. Like his enemy, Walpole, who died by a disorder almost as terrible, he had called in an ignorant empiric to his aid, and it is remarkable that in the cases of both these eminent statesmen, the improper remedies to which they were subjected hastened their ends. Lord Chesterfield, writes, about this period, to a lady in Paris:—"I frequently see our friend Bolingbroke, but I see him with great concern. A humour he has long had in his cheek proves to be cancerous and has made an alarming progress of late. Hitherto, it is not attended with pain, which is all he wishes, for as to the rest he is resigned. Truly a mind like his, so far superior to the generality, would have well deserved that nature should have made an effort in his favour as to the body, and given him an uncommon share of health and duration."

The excruciating agonies to which he was subsequently subjected, are said to have been endured by him with the most admirable calmness and resignation. "God who placed me here," he said to Lord Chesterfield, "will do what he pleases with me hereafter, and he knows best what to do; may he bless you!" Finding that his disorder was making rapid progress, he expressed a wish to draw his last breath at Battersea, where he was removed a short time before his dissolution. To the end, he adhered to those principles which he had unfortunately advocated through life, giving orders that none of the clergy should be admitted to him in his last moments. Lord Chesterfield, after observing that the remedies to which he was subjected hastened his end, touches slightly on the closing scenes of his friend's life: "What I most lament," he says, "is that the medicines put him to exquisite pain —an evil I dread much more than death, both for my friends and myself. I lose a warm, an amiable, and instructive friend. I saw him a fortnight before his death, when he depended upon a cure, and so did I; and he desired I would not come any more till he was quite well, which he expected would be in ten or twelve days. The next day the great pains came on, and never left him till within two days of his death, during which he lay insensible. What a man! What extensive knowledge! What eloquence! His passions, which were strong, were injurious to the delicacy of his sentiments; they were apt to be confounded together, and often wilfully. The world will do him more justice now, than in his lifetime."

Bolingbroke expired at his seat at Battersea* on the 12th of December, 1751, in his seventy-fourth year. He was interred by the side of his second wife, in Battersea Church, where a monument, with an inscription, was sometime afterwards erected to his memory. The original draft of the epitaph, in his own hand-writing, is still preserved in the British Museum.

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* The residence of Bolingbroke at Battersea, part of which is still standing, is perhaps the most classical spot in the neighbourhood of London, and, in any other country would be regarded as an object of interest and respect. It was long the

Of the character of Lord Bolingbroke, a better insight may be obtained by a review of his actions, and a perusal of his writings, than if volumes were written on the subject. The very mention of his name by his contemporaries is usually accompanied either by exulting panegyric or the most violent abuse; nor would it be easy to decide whether he was most deservedly admired by his friends or disliked by his enemies. As a specimen of the enthusiasm which his genius, his social suavity, and the magic of his conversation excited in his own immediate circle, we may transcribe the character drawn of him by Lord Orrery. "Lord Bolingbroke," he says, "had early made himself master of men and books; but in his first career of life, being immersed at once in business and pleasure, he ran through a variety of scenes in a surprising and eccentric manner. When his pas-

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manorial residence of the ancient family of the St. Johns; it was frequented, in the reign of Queen Anne, by the celebrated statesmen and poets of that period; in one of the rooms Pope wrote his "Essay on Man," and in another Bolingbroke expired. The author recently attempted to visit a house consecrated by so many interesting associations, but he had the misfortune to be refused admittance by the owner.

sions subsided by years and disappointment, and when he had improved his rational faculties by more grave studies and reflection, he shone out in his retirement with a lustre peculiar to himself, though not seen by vulgar eyes. The gay statesman was changed into a philosopher, equal to any of the sages of antiquity. The wisdom of Socrates, the dignity and ease of Pliny, and the wit of Horace, appeared in all his writings and conversation."

Such is the character drawn of Lord Bolingbroke, by one of his most intimate friends; while on the other hand, his enemies have delighted to deface so attractive a portrait, and have frequently substituted an odious representation of their own. Between eulogium on one side, and execration on the other, it becomes somewhat difficult to arrive at the truth. Moreover, posterity still views the likeness through the distorted medium of party feeling, and it will probably continue to depend on the particular opinions of the individual, whether Bolingbroke be regarded as most censurable for his faults or admirable for his virtues.

Nevertheless, the character of Bolingbroke must be allowed, on all hands, to have been of unusual power and brilliancy. "His address," says Lord Chesterfield, "pre-engages, his eloquence persuades, and his knowledge informs all who approach him;" and the same writer elsewhere observes:—"Bolingbroke talked all day long, as elegantly as he wrote." Swift eulogizes his "vast range of wit and fancy;" Pope styles him "the best writer of the age;" and Parr speaks of "hanging with rapture over the gorgeous declamation of Bolingbroke." As a statesman, his talents were of the first order, and as an orator, he presents the most shining figure in the forensic gallery of our country. Swift speaks of his "invincible eloquence;" Burnet, prejudiced as he was against Bolingbroke, admits his oratorical powers to have been almost superhuman; and Pitt, in a circle of friends, observed that he would sooner recover a speech of Bolingbroke, than the missing books of Livy, or any other literary treasure which has been lost to the world. His political writings are of the same high order. They will probably continue to be read for their force of argument, their perspicuity, and the extreme elegance of their diction, as long as the English language shall remain a written tongue.

On the merits of Bolingbroke as a philosophical writer, and on his peculiar tenets in regard to revealed religion, it is neither our province, nor our desire to dwell. Those writings and those tenets, which were formerly inveighed against by the clergy from the pulpit, and denounced by a jury in a court of justice as a nuisance, have now fortunately sunk into the oblivion they deserve. Putting aside every higher consideration, the mere attempt to undermine a creed on which the hope and happiness of thousands are fixed, is an act the most cruel and unjustifiable that can be conceived. We ourselves, indeed, have just as little right to judge

Bolingbroke for his peculiar opinions, as Bolingbroke had a right to force them on others. Neither the pure life of Hume, the gratitude which we owe to the illustrious Gibbon, nor the brilliant philosophy of Bolingbroke,— true and conscientious as may have been their disbelief,—can exempt them from the charge of cruelty towards their fellows; while, at the same time, they derived no advantages to themselves.

Bolingbroke, by his last will, bequeathed all his "manuscript books, papers, and writings" to David Mallet, whom he selected to be his editor, but who proved singularly incompetent to perform the task. A complete edition of his works, edited by Mallet, came out on the 6th of March, 1764, and it was on this occasion that Dr. Johnson gave vent to his memorable tirade against the infidelity of Bolingbroke:—"Sir, he was a scoundrel and a coward,—a scoundrel for charging a blunderbuss against religion and morality; a coward, because he had not resolution to fire it off himself, but left half-a-crown to a beggarly Scotchman, to draw the trigger after his death."

The publication of Bolingbroke's works, (among which there was considerable matter that had not hitherto seen the light,) excited an extraordinary sensation alike in the religious and in the literary world. His memory and his principles were attacked by a host of assailants, and the occasion gave rise to numerous angry denunciations from the highest order of literary controversy, to the most insignificant lampoons.

Many who had trembled at the name of Bolingbroke when alive, became the virulent maligners of his memory when he was dead. Among others, the celebrated Garrick exerted himself in the cause of religion, and in a poem which he wrote on the death of Mr. Pelham, who expired on the same day that Mallet's edition made its appearance, we find him thus stigmatizing the impiety of Bolingbroke. With this trifle, which is not without the kind of merit at which such productions aim, we will conclude our present Memoir:—

> "The same sad morn to Church and State,
> (So for our sins 'twas fixed by fate,)
> A double stroke was given;
> Black as the whirlwinds of the north,
> St. John's fell genius issued forth,
> And Pelham fled to heaven."

CHARLES MORDAUNT,

EARL OF PETERBOROUGH.

Lord Peterborough's romantic and adventurous turn of mind.—His birth.—Embarks for Tangier.—Joins the Prince of Orange at the Hague, and is, subsequently, appointed a Lord of the Bed-chamber and first Lord-Commissioner of the Treasury.—Created Earl of Monmouth.—Serves under King William.—Engaged in an intrigue against the Duke of Ormond and Lord Orford.—Publishes an attack against the Duke.—Committed to the Tower in consequence.—His publication burned by the common hangman.—Succeeds to the Earldom of Peterborough.—Gets into favour with Queen Anne.—Commands an expedition against Spain, and is appointed joint-Admiral of the Fleet.—His Manifestoes, and romantic exploits at Barcelona.—His letter to the Duchess of Marlborough.—His justice and disinterestedness in Spain.—His recall.—Compliments paid him by the House of Lords.—Made a Knight of the Garter, and sent ambassador to Sicily.—Anecdote of the Earl related by Richardson.—The Earl's contempt for appearances.—His letter to Pope.—His admiration of Penn the Quaker.—Accompanies him to Pennsylvania.—His character as a letter-writer.—Specimen of his poetry.—His literary society.—Pope's account of his last illness.—His singular letter to Lady Suffolk.—His death.—Sketch of his person.—His autobiography suppressed by his widow.

Lord Peterborough appears to have been the last of that peculiar class of heroes, who mingled with an almost romantic courage and a Quixotic love of adventure, a taste for literature, and a devotion to poetry and the fine arts. To these qualities may be added a chivalrous admiration of the fair sex, an agreeable figure, and a graceful wit. He was formed in the same mould as Lord Herbert of Cherbury, Sir Kenelm Digby, and the Admirable Crichton, and if the days of chivalry be indeed over, they may be said to have expired with the hero of Barcelona and the accomplished courtier of Queen Anne.

Charles, eldest son of John, first Viscount Mordaunt, was born in 1658. He was descended from an ancient family; his ancestor, Sir Osbert le Mordaunt, having accompanied William the Norman to England, and having been rewarded with a grant of land by the Conqueror. His family appear to have ever devotedly attached themselves to the service of their sovereign; and during the civil wars, both his father, Lord Mordaunt, and his uncle, the Earl of Peterborough, having zealously supported the royal cause, were declared traitors by the Parliament, and deprived of their estates. They both figured in their generations as gallant, but profligate, men; in addition to which, the circumstance of their professing the Roman Catholic religion rendered them peculiarly obnoxious during the rule of the Puritans. Their gallantry and their profligacy appear to have been the only qualities which descended from them to their illustrious relative.

Rejecting those prejudices in favour of passive obedience, which had long been the characteristic of his race, he seems to have regarded with equal contempt, the principle of non-resistance, and the doctrine of transubstantiation. In the one case, he deserted the fortunes of King James for those of King William; and in the other, rejected the tenets of the Church of Rome to profess himself a deist.

Of the youthful days of Lord Peterborough we know little beyond his own confession, that he had been guilty of three capital crimes before he was twenty.* In 1675, at the age of seventeen, he succeeded his father as Viscount Mordaunt; and on the 4th of June, 1680, embarked with Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham, and the Earl of Plymouth, for Tangiers, where he distinguished himself in some encounters with the Moors. He served also in his youth under Admirals Byng and Narborough against the Algerines.

During the brief reign of James the Second, Lord Mordaunt joined in the secret intrigues against the government of that monarch, and is said to have been the first of the English nobility who invited the Prince of Orange to England. He, afterwards, joined the Prince at the Hague, and accompanied him during his expedition to England; on which occasion, according to Burnet, it was solely owing to his advice that the Prince was induced to land his forces in the west. His services met with an adequate reward. William, almost immediately after his being called to the throne, appointed him a Lord of the Bed-chamber, a member of the Privy council, and first Lord-Commissioner of the Treasury. At the same time, on the 9th April, 1689, he was created Earl of Monmouth, and the following month was appointed Lord-Lieutenant and Custos Rotulorum of the county of Northampton.

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* One of these vaunted crimes was probably the share which he had in the intrigues of Algernon Sydney and Lord Russell, the former of whom he accompanied to the scaffold.

During the reign of King William, there occurs little in Lord Mordaunt's history worthy of record. He served, however, under that monarch in Flanders during the campaign of 1692, and in 1697 we find him engaged in a disgraceful attempt to suborn the unfortunate Sir John Fenwick, to accuse the Duke of Ormond and Lord Orford of a design of restoring King James. About the same time, conjointly with Dr. D'Avenant, he published an attack against the Duke of Ormond, under the name of Smith. The share which he had in this transaction, subsequently transpired, and his conduct met with the punishment which it deserved. He was committed a prisoner to the Tower; the House of Peers ordered the book to be burned by the common hangman; and the Commons declared it to be a scandalous attempt to breed dissensions between the King and his best friends. The same year (1697), he succeeded, by the death of his uncle, to the Earldom of Peterborough. *

On the accession of Queen Anne, he once more found himself in favour at court, and was re-appointed Lord-Lieutenant of the county of Northampton, and on the 27th of March, 1705, was re-admitted to the Privy Council. It was at this period that he was afforded a proper stage for displaying that military genius and romantic daring, for which his character is principally conspicuous. The English government having determined to land forces in Spain, for the purpose of expelling Philip the Fifth from the throne of that country, and of securing the accession of Charles the Third, the command of the expedition was entrusted to the Earl of Peterborough. At the same time, he was appointed joint-Admiral of the Fleet with Sir Cloudesley Shovel, with whom he sailed from England the 24th of May, 1705.

The expedition having, in the first instance, touched at Lisbon, for the purpose of taking on board King Charles, eventually effected a landing in the Bay of Barcelona. The pen and the sword of Lord Peterborough were immediately put in requisition. With the former he composed mani-

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* In a letter dated the 13th of May in this year, he is spoken of as "talking only of following the plough, and his wife of being a dairy-woman."—*Letters Illustrative of the Reign of William the Third*, vol. i. p. 246. His uncle, whose heir he was, died on the 19th of the following month, which probably altered his views.

festoes, which had a powerful effect in exciting the inhabitants in his favour, while, with the latter, he performed a series of exploits, only to be paralleled in the pages of romance. His first attempt was on Fort Montjovi, which commands the city of Barcelona, which he took, sword in hand, at the head of a thousand men, notwithstanding the place had hitherto been regarded as impregnable. Of this exploit, which, unfortunately, cost the Prince of Darmstadt his life, we find the following notice in the London Gazette :—" Our men, who were with the Prince of Darmstadt, upon his Highness's being killed, began to give ground, but the Earl of Peterborough came immediately, and rallied them ; and, being animated by his Lordship's presence and example, they beat the enemy into the fort, and lodged themselves in all the outworks."* The capture of this place, as a necessary consequence, led to the capitulation of Barcelona, into which town Charles the Third made his entrance in triumph.

From this period, success followed success, and one feat of chivalry succeeded another, till, in an incredibly short space of time, Lord Peterborough found himself in possession of Catalonia, Valencia, Arragon, and Majorca, with a considerable part of Murcia and Castile. Valencia he overran and conquered with a force amounting to only two hundred and eighty horse and nine hundred foot. It has been objected to him, in his capacity of general, that his exploits were but " happy temerities;" that he possessed neither the genius nor the prudence to command a large army; and that, though he undoubtedly arrived at extraordinary results with very inadequate means, yet that his successes were owing rather to a happy combination of circumstances, and to the chivalrous spirit which he had infused into his men, than to any superiority of military talent.

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* Gazette, 4167.

There may, possibly, be some truth in these objections. Nevertheless, the world will ever regard that man as a hero, who, during a long series of splendid exploits, never dispatched a hundred men on an expedition without accompanying them himself: and, moreover, we can scarcely fail to award him the merit of being a great general, when we consider that, though at the head of only ten thousand men, he drove Philip the Fifth and the French army out of Spain, the forces of the latter being nearly treble his own.

It was consequent on these extraordinary successes, that the Earl of Galway was enabled to advance, without opposition, to Madrid, and that Charles the Third had an opportunity of fixing himself at the Escurial. Unfortunately, however, Charles hesitated to follow up his good fortune; and by his refusal to proceed to the capital, as well as by his conduct on other occasions, seems to have occasioned great annoyance to the English General.

To the Duchess of Marlborough, Peterborough writes in July, 1706:—"Your Grace has, before this can come to your hands, heard of my Lord

Galway's being at Madrid, but will wonder, when I tell you, we cannot prevail with the King of Spain to go thither; and his wise ministers have thought fit to defer it from the time it was possible, at least two months, if some accident do not prevent it for ever. I might, before now, have sent your Grace letters from thence, and the King have passed thither without difficulty or danger; and three several councils of war had resolved his Majesty's march by Valencia, when I was forced to make a siege, and take Requens to clear his way, which, when done, he is advised to take another, contrary to all I could write, or the Portuguese ambassador and the Queen's envoy could say. Her Majesty's happy stars, and our good luck may prevent accidents; but I cannot but lament to your Grace the trying such dangerous experiments. Your Grace has not been without some great mortifications of this kind, when the want of power has prevented the amazing successes which always attended the Duke of Marlborough when at liberty; but mine of this kind are eternal, and no history ever produced such an everlasting struggle of the ministers against the interest of their master." *

Throughout his Spanish campaign, Peterborough no less distinguished himself by his romantic gallantry, than by his humanity to the inhabitants, and his even-handed justice. When at Barcelona, he restored to the citizens the property of which they had been plundered by the troops

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* Correspondence of the Duchess of Marlborough, vol. i. p. 35.

of the Prince of Hesse, while, on the other hand, a Spaniard having killed a British officer, he hung the offender at the knocker of his own door.* His disinterestedness was no less remarkable. Far from attempting to enrich himself at the expense of his country, he was extremely frugal of the public money, and when compensation was offered him for the loss of his baggage, valued at 8,000*l.*, he positively refused the proffered indemnification, insisting only that his army should be supplied with corn, of which it stood in need.

His love of women, indeed, was carried beyond all bounds; and Spain, a country so proverbially famous for beauty and intrigue, afforded him opportunities enough of indulging in this passion. Many years afterwards, he writes to the famous Countess of Suffolk, then the professed idol of his affections,—"The Spanish ladies, of all others, have the most noble and reasonable sentiments of love. From the Queen, down to the maid of honour, they all accept of a profession of love with a decent gratitude: they never pretend to scorn or reprove a lover, but will thank and — refuse. They know how to make themselves understood; but then they expect to be obeyed, and not importuned. The unhappy admirer must acquiesce upon the first hint; he soon perceives his good or bad destiny. If it be a man the lady esteems, he commonly becomes her confessor, and she gives him the best excuse, owning she likes elsewhere. As this justifies the lady, it probably may cure the lover; and thus wounds (if curable) are healed without rancour against the fair one who innocently gave them."* A characteristic story is related of Lord Peterborough, that, during his Spanish campaign, a beautiful woman having taken refuge in a convent, he ordered artillery to be pointed against the walls in order that, by frightening her forth, he might obtain a view of her person.

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* He once said to Pope, speaking of General Cadogan, that, after all, "A General was but a hangman-in-chief." *Spence's Anecdotes*, p. 172.

Whatever may have been the causes of difference between Lord Peterborough and Charles the Third, certain it is that the former was recalled from the scene of his glory in consequence of the charges preferred against him by the Spanish monarch. These charges were, afterwards, investigated in the House of Lords, when not only were they declared to be utterly unfounded, but the House voted that,—"During the time he had the command of the army in Spain, he performed many great and eminent services, for which he had the thanks of their House." The Lord Chancellor addressed him in a most flattering speech, in which his "wonderful and amazing success," "his personal bravery and conduct," and his "wise counsels," are dwelt upon in the most glowing language. "My Lords," said Lord Peterborough, in reply; "for the great honour and favour I have received from your Lordships, I return my most humble thanks, with an heart full of the truest respect and gratitude. No service can deserve such a reward. It is more than a sufficient recompence for my past hardships, and to which nothing can give an addition. I shall endeavour in all my future actions not to appear unworthy of the unmerited favour I have this day received from this great assembly." According to Lord Lansdowne, immediately after quitting this splendid scene, he ordered his coach to stop at a poulterer's shop, where he alighted and purchased a fowl for his dinner.

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* Suffolk Correspondence, vol. i, p. 144,

During the years 1710 and 1711, Lord Peterborough was employed in various embassies at Vienna, Turin, and the Italian courts. So rapid were his movements at this period, that it was said of him that he had seen more Kings and more postilions than any man in Europe. Swift writes to him, about this time, that not knowing where to address his letters, instead of writing *to* him, he wrote *at* him. In the closet he appears to have exercised the same expedition with his pen; indeed, so wonderful is said to have been his despatch of business, that, according to an eyewitness, he was able to dictate to nine different amanuenses, on as many different subjects, at the same time. This circumstance was related by Pope to Spence. "Lord Peterborough," said Pope, "could dictate letters to nine amanuenses together, as I was assured by a gentleman who saw him do it, when ambassador at Turin. He walked about his room and told each in his turn what he was to write. One, perhaps, was a letter to the Emperor, another to an old friend, a third to a mistress, and a fourth to a statesman, and so on: and yet he carried so many and so different connexions in his head all at the same time."

His civil services appear to have been rewarded more liberally than his military. On his return to England, in 1712, he was appointed Colonel of the horse-guards, and General of marines; and on the 4th of August, 1713, was created a knight of the Garter. At the close of the year he was sent ambassador to the King of Sicily, at whose court he remained till the death of Queen Anne. Two years after that event, while wandering among the Italian states, we find him arrested at Bologna, by order of the Papal Legate, on a charge of intending to assassinate the Pretender. His innocence was easily proved, and on his speedy release from prison, not only was every reparation offered by the Papal government, for the indignity, but it was questioned whether the English fleet would not receive orders to avenge it.

Originally, a friendly feeling had existed between the Duke of Marlborough and Lord Peterborough, which ceased, however, as soon as they became rivals for fame. Shortly after the accession of Queen Anne, the latter had been named for the appointments of Captain-General of the plantations of America, and Governor of Jamaica, but owing to a remonstrance of the Duke of Marlborough, that it was unadvisable to confide such important trusts to a man whose temper was so uncertain, and whose passions were so headstrong, the Government excused themselves from fulfilling their intentions. The Duke's share in this transaction not improbably rankled in the mind of Peterborough; for though we still find him corresponding in friendly terms with the Duchess of Marlborough, yet, not long afterwards, he openly opposed the measures of the Duke in parliament, and latterly is said to have spoken of him with contempt.

Generally speaking, the animosities of the Duchess of Marlborough were those of her husband, and, consequently, the seeds of dissension were no sooner sown between Peterborough and her lord, than the hero of Barcelona became an object of the most virulent abuse. Her invectives are, on all occasions, amusing from their cordiality; and in the case of her old friend, Lord Peterborough, are not a little curious. Speaking of him, conjointly with Lord Rivers,* she says, —"It is hardly worth while to mention two lords, who, being discontented that favours and rewards were not heaped upon them by the ministry, became mere tools to promote the designs of their enemies. The one was Lord Rivers, a man scandalous and vile in his character to a very low degree, of no better reputation than a common cheat or pickpocket, having robbed his own father, and gone under the name of

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* Richard Savage, fourth Earl Rivers. He married Penelope, daughter of John Downs, Esq. of Wardley, in Lancashire, and died, without leaving male issue, in 1712. On the death of his kinsman and successor, John, fifth Earl Rivers, the earldom became extinct.

Tyburn Dick for many years. The other was Lord Peterborough, a man who, to the same vileness of soul, had joined a sort of knight-errantry, that made up a very odd sort of composition; one, who had wasted his fortune and worn out his credit, and had nothing left but so much resolution and so little honour, as made him capable of anything they had to put upon him."[*]

Even after the death of Queen Anne, when the interests of Peterborough and her husband no longer clashed, and when both of these celebrated men were treated with equal indifference by the new monarch, the Duchess expresses herself not a little provoked at the Earl entering her drawing-room with the same ease and unconcernedness, as if their interests had ever been the same, and as if he had never been the opponent of her illustrious lord. For instance, on one of his early letters to her, we find the following very curious endorsement in her own hand-writing: — "This Lord made speeches against the Duke of Marlborough in parliament, *when he served my Lord Oxford's Abigail,*[†] and since the Queen's death he comes to me and talks as if he had always been of our interest and of our opinion."[‡] It would seem, by this passage, that the rancour of the Duchess originated quite as much in his having espoused the cause of Mrs. Masham, as in his having been the maligner of the Duke. To have been the enemy of her husband might have been forgiven; but to have been the confidant of her detested rival, was, in the mind of the acrimonious Duchess, a crime the most heinous that could possibly have been committed.

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[*] Marlborough Correspondence, vol. ii, p. 137.

[†] Abigail Hill, the celebrated Mrs. Masham.

[‡] Marlborough Correspondence, vol. i, p. 5.

An anecdote is recorded of Lord Peterborough, which, while it displays the quickness of his wit, shows how ready he was to exercise it at the expense of his illustrious contemporary, the Duke of Marlborough. At the time when the latter was in the height of his unpopularity, a mob, mistaking Lord Peterborough for the Duke, gathered rather tumultuously round his chair, and began to threaten him with personal violence. "Gentlemen," said the Earl, "I can convince you, for two reasons, that I am not the Duke of Marlborough. In the first place, I have only five guineas in my pocket; and, in the second, they are heartily at your service."

In a letter, dated the 23rd of January, 1697, from James Vernon, Secretary of State to King William, to the Duke of Shrewsbury, there is an amusing account of one of Lord Peterborough's early adventures:—

"Sir John Talbot," says Vernon, "came to me last night, upon a very remarkable occasion which he had in the morning communicated to my Lord Keeper: and it is thus:—One Talbot tells him he has had a pretty long acquaintance with one Brown, whom he knew a student in the Temple, where his father made him reasonable allowance, till his estate came to be forfeited; and since that time, he has lived by play, sharping, and a little on the highway. This man, with three or four more, set upon my Lord Monmouth last summer. The account he gives of it is, that they took from him his hat, sword, periwig, a ring he had on his finger, and six shillings in money, which was all he had.

"My Lord, making them a compliment, that by their behaviour they looked like gentlemen, and to take that course only out of necessity, and therefore desired to know how he might place ten guineas upon them. They immediately gave him all his things again, except the six shillings which he would not take. The guard from Chelsea college coming to the hedge-side about that time, and firing upon them, they told my Lord they should be obliged to mischief him, if he did not call to the guard that there were none but friends, which he did, and bid his coach drive on.

"Some time after this, Brown made my Lord a visit and told him his errand. My Lord asked him, how he durst venture himself in coming thither. He returned my Lord his compliment, that he knew he was a man of honour, he came with assurance of what he had said to them, and those who were necessitated to lead his life ran great dangers elsewhere. My Lord gave him a guinea or two, and encouraged his coming again, and after that he had frequent meetings with his Lordship at some mistress's lodgings."*

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* Letters Illustrative of the Reign of William III. vol. i. pp. 179. 180.

Of the hearty manner in which Lord Peterborough enjoyed a joke, the following anecdote is related by the younger Richardson: "The great Earl of Peterborough," he says, "who had much sense, much wit, and much whim, leaped out of his chariot one day on seeing a dancing-master with pearl-coloured silk stocking slightly stepping over the broad stones, and picking his way, in extremely dirty weather: he ran after him,—who soon took to his heels,—with his drawn sword, in order to drive him into the mud, but into which he of course followed himself."

From the period when Lord Peterborough ceased to figure as a soldier and a statesman,—or rather from the time when he was unable to obtain employment from the State,—we find him solacing himself with the society of the wits of the period, and assuming a character for that kind of philosophy which affects a superiority to the common evils of life, and delights in laughing at coxcombs and fools. His utter contempt of the fops of the day, and of all outward appearances, seems to have carried him into the opposite extreme, slovenliness, and into a disregard for the decencies of life. His personal eccentricities, and, especially, his indifference to the common observances of society, are frequently alluded to by his contemporaries. Lady Hervey, writes to Lady Suffolk from Bath, on the 7th of June, 1725,—"Lord Peterborough is here, and has been so some time, though, by his dress, one would believe he had not designed to make any stay; for he wears boots all day, and, as I hear, must do so, having brought no shoes with him. It is a comical sight to see him with his blue ribbon and star, and a cabbage under each arm, or a chicken in his hand, which, after he himself has purchased at market, he carries home for his dinner."*

The change which had taken place in Lord Peterborough's character,—a change from the indulgence in headstrong passions to philosophical pursuits,—is dwelt upon by him, apparently with much satisfaction, in one of his letters to Pope;—"I must give you some good news," he writes, "with relation to myself, because I know you wish me well. I am cured of some diseases in my old age, which tormented me very much in my youth. I was possessed with violent and uneasy passions, such as a peevish concern for truth, and a saucy love for my country. When a Christian priest preached against the spirit of the Gospel; when an English judge determined against Magna Charta; when a minister acted against common sense, I used to fret. Now, Sir, let what will happen, I keep myself in temper. As I have no flattering hopes, I banish all useless fears."

Notwithstanding the anxiety which he professes in this passage that Christianity should be preached in its true spirit, Lord Peterborough is well known to have been a Deist. He once paid a visit to the amiable Fenelon at the episcopal palace at Cambrai. After prolonging his stay for some weeks, he one day observed to the Chevalier Ramsay, — "Upon my word, I must quit the Archbishop as soon as I can; for if I stay a week longer, I shall be made a Christian of in spite of myself." He remarked on another occasion, in conversation with Pope,—"One morning, I went to hear Penn preach; for 'tis my way to be civil to all religions." Such was his admiration of Penn, that he once accompanied the philanthropist across the Atlantic for the purpose of visiting his new colony of Pennsylvania, from whence he returned, highly gratified with its primitive enjoyments and admirable laws.

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* Letters to and from the Countess of Suffolk, vol. i. p. 183.

Horace Walpole observes of Lord Peterborough that he was "One of those men of careless wit and negligent grace, who scatter a thousand bon-mots and idle verses, which we painful compilers gather and hoard, till the owners stare to find themselves authors." The poetry of Lord Peterborough, however, is now deservedly forgotten, and his letters, for which he was once famous, have also been stripped of their celebrity. According to Pope,—"He would say pretty and lively things in his letters, but they would be rather too gay and wandering." Swift also remarks on a letter which he had received from him,—"He writes so well, I have no mind to answer him; and so kind that I must answer him." Even Walpole has condescended to praise his epistolary talents, observing that "four very genteel letters of his are printed among Pope's." Posterity, however, has recently had access to many private collections, and among the correspondence of the last century, several letters of Lord Peterborough have seen the light.* These, for the most part, are in the highest degree disappointing. Occasionally, indeed, we find a caustic remark; a well-turned though elaborate sentence; and something like an approach to humour. Whenever he addresses a woman, however, his compliments out-herod even the stately nonsense of the day; while his love-letters,—of which several, addressed to Mrs Howard, are inserted in the "Suffolk Correspondence,"—are, without a single exception, turgid, and often absurd.

Notwithstanding the slender claims of Lord Peterborough to the reputation of a poet, his character is in every respect so remarkable, that a single specimen of his poetical powers may not be unacceptable to the reader. The following verses, indeed, which he addressed to Mrs. Howard, the celebrated mistress of George the Second, are not without the merit which such trifles may claim, and are at least superior to the ponderous prose eulogiums which he addressed to the same lady:—

"I said to my heart, between sleeping and waking,
'Thou wild thing that always art leaping or aching,
What black, brown, or fair, in what clime, in what nation,
By turns has not taught thee a pit-a-pat-ation?'

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* See "Pope's Letters;" the "Correspondence of Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough;" and "Letters to and from the Countess of Suffolk."

Thus accused, the wild thing gave this sober reply:—
'See, the heart without motion, though Celia pass by!
Not the beauty she has, not the wit that she borrows,
Give the eye any joys, or the heart any sorrows.

When our Sappho appears,—she, whose wit so refined
I am forced to applaud with the rest of mankind—
Whatever she says is with spirit and fire;
Every word I attend, but I only admire.

Prudentia as vainly would put in her claim,
Ever gazing on Heaven, though man is her aim:
'Tis love, not devotion, that turns up her eyes—
Those stars of this world are too good for the skies.

But Chloe, so lively, so easy, so fair,
Her wit so genteel, without art, without care;
When she comes in my way—the motion, the pain,
The leapings, the achings, return all again.'

O wonderful creature! a woman of reason!
Never grave out of pride, never gay out of season;
When so easy to guess who this angel should be,
Would one think Mrs. Howard ne'er dreamt it was she?"

There are two rather curious circumstances connected with these verses. In the first place, at the period when Lord Peterborough was thus addressing Mrs. Howard in the language of a lover, the one had attained to his sixty-fifth, and the other to her fortieth, year. In the next place, Horace Walpole, (whom we have seen speaking of himself as a "painful compiler" in regard to the "bon-mots and idle verses" of Lord Peterborough,) falls into a strange error in recording the verses to Mrs. Howard. "This lord," he says, "wrote a ballad beginning,—'I said to my heart, between sleeping and waking.' He was also the author of those *well-known* lines, —'Who'd have thought Mrs. Howard ne'er dreamt it was she?'" The reader will have seen that Walpole has manufactured two poems out of one; having quoted the first and last line of the verses to Mrs. Howard, as the initial lines of two separate productions.

Lord Peterborough lived on the most intimate terms with Swift, Pope, Gay, and the many celebrated men who have immortalized the reign of Queen Anne as the Augustan age of England. By his contemporaries, he seems to have been both loved and admired; and it was no slight compliment to his talents, that, though Pope spoke of him as "not near so great a genius" as Lord Bolingbroke; yet that he should for a moment have thought of coupling his idol and Peterborough in the same breath, thus indirectly implying that a comparison was possible. "I love the hang-dog dearly," was the remarkable encomium of Swift; and Pope once observed of him,—"He has too much wit as well as courage to make a solid general."

Early in life Lord Peterborough had united himself to Carey, daughter of Sir Alexander Fraser, of Dotes, in Scotland. By this lady he had two sons, who seem to have shared the impetuous valour of their father, and who distinguished themselves in the service of their country: he had also one daughter, Henrietta, married to Alexander, second Duke of Gordon, the grandfather of the last Duke of that title. Lady Peterborough died in May, 1709, and within eleven months from that event her husband had also occasion to bewail the loss of his two gallant sons. John, Lord Mordaunt, his eldest son, died of the small-pox on the 6th of April, 1710; surviving his younger brother, Henry, who died of the same disease, about six weeks.

In 1735, more than a quarter of a century after the death of his first wife, Lord Peterborough, at the age of seventy-seven, acknowledged his marriage with a beautiful singer, Anastasia Robinson. She was the daughter of a Mr. Robinson, a painter, whom she supported, in his old age, by singing at the Opera and teaching music and the Italian language. Gay celebrates her vocal powers:—

> "O soothe me with some soft Italian air,
> Let harmony compose my tortured ear!
> When Anastasia's voice commands the strain,
> The melting warble thrills through every vein.
> Thought stands suspended, silence pleased attends,
> While in her notes the heavenly choir descends."*

Of the year in which they were married we have no record; indeed, it was only when broken down by disease, and when harassed by her repeated refusals to live under the same roof with him, unless he acknowledged her as his wife, that he was induced to make the confession to the world. When he proclaimed his weakness, it was in a very characteristic manner, by calling aloud, in the rooms at Bath, "for Lady Peterborough's chair," when the company immediately arose and congratulated her on her marriage. Their intercourse, however, must have been long notorious, for, as many as twelve years before, Lord Peterborough had horsewhipped a foreign singer, Senesino, at a rehearsal, for some offence which he had given to Miss Robinson.*

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* Gay, "Epistle to William Pulteney."

For some years previous to his death, Lord Peterborough appears to have suffered acutely from disease in an aggravated form. Yet if mortal ever was superior to pain, it was this extraordinary man. "I am not afraid," he once observed, "I never saw occasion to fear." In October 1730, at the age of seventy-two, he writes to Lady Suffolk, with something of his former gallantry,—"It is certain you or none must have the credit of my recovery. The doctors have told me mine is an inward pain; if so, I can have no cure from any other person. You blame me for seeking no remedies, and yet you know vain attempts of any kind are ridiculous. I have, some time since, made a bargain with fate to submit with patience to all her freaks; some accidents have given me a great contempt, almost a distaste of life. Shakspeare shall tell you my opinion of it:—

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* Lady Mary W. Montagu writes to her sister, the Countess of Mar, in 1723,—"Would any one believe that Mrs. Robinson is, at the same time, a prude and a kept mistress? She has engaged half the town in arms, from the nicety of her virtue, which was not able to bear the too near approach of Senesino in the opera; and her condescension in her accepting of Lord Peterborough for a champion, who has signalized both his love and courage upon this occasion in as many instances as ever Don Quixote did for Dulcinea. Poor Senesino, like a vanquished giant, was forced to confess upon his knees that Anastasia was a nonpareil of virtue and beauty. Lord Stanhope, as dwarf to the said giant, joked on his side, and was challenged for his pains. Lord Delawar was Lord Peterborough's second; my Lady miscarried,—the whole town divided into parties on this important point. Innumerable have been the disorders between the two sexes on so great an account, besides half the House of Peers being put under arrest. By the providence of Heaven, and the wise cares of his Majesty, no bloodshed ensued. However, things are now tolerably accommodated, and the fair lady rides through the town in triumph, in the shining merlin of her hero, not to reckon the more solid advantage of 100*l*. a month, which 'tis said he allows her."—*Lady M. W. Montagu's Letters*, vol. ii, p. 167.

> 'Life is as tedious as a twice-told tale,
> Vexing the dull ear of a drowsy man.
> Life is a walking shadow,—a poor player
> That frets and struts his hour upon the stage,
> And then is seen no more.'

Do not wonder then, if the world is become so indifferent to me, that I can even amuse myself with the thoughts of going out of it. I was writing, some days ago, a dialogue betwixt me and one that is departed before me; one that would have kept his promise to you, if possible. When the case falls out, Mr. Pope shall give it to you."*

Pope has bequeathed us some very curious particulars respecting the last days of Lord Peterborough. "'Tis amazing," he says, "how Lord

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* Suffolk Correspondence, v. i, p. 389.

Peterborough keeps up his spirits under so painful and violent an illness as that he is afflicted with. When I went down to see him in Hampshire, a few weeks ago, I did not get to him till the dusk of the evening; he was sitting on his couch, and entertained all the company with as much life and sprightliness of conversation, as if he had been perfectly well; and when the candles were brought in, I was amazed to see that he looked more like a ghost than a living creature. Dying as he was, he went from thence to Bristol; and it was there that it was declared, that he had no chance for a recovery, but by going through the torture of a very uncommon chirurgical operation; and that, even with it, there were a great many more chances against him than for him. However, he would go through it; and the very day after set out from Bristol for Bath, in spite of all that St. André and the physicians could say to him."

"It was some time after this," adds Spence, who continues the narrative, "that I saw him at Kensington; I was admitted into his *ruelle*, for he kept his bed, and everybody thought he would not last above five or six days longer: and yet his first speech to me was,—'Sir, you have travelled, and know the places; I am resolved to go to Lisbon or Naples,' That very day, he would rise to sit at dinner with us, and, in a little time after, actually went to Lisbon."* Pope informs us that he seriously contemplated accompanying him, and when Spence remonstrated that it must be a melancholy thing to be constantly with a person in so distressing a condition, "That is true," he said; "but if you consider how I should have been employed in nursing and attending a sick friend, that thought would have made it agreeable."* During his illness, Lady Peterborough is said to have attended him with unwearying kindness.

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* Spence's Anecdotes, p. 171.

The chirurgical operation alluded to by Pope was the very painful one of being cut for the stone. He refused to be bound during the operation, and when the surgeon remonstrated with him on his obstinacy, "No, Sir," he said, "it shall never be reported that a Mordaunt was seen bound: do your best, Sir." He then desired to be placed in the position most favourable for using the knife, and underwent the agony without flinching. Three weeks afterwards, he was at his own seat at Bevis Mount.

It was about this period that, at the age of seventy-seven, he addressed the following singular letter to Lady Suffolk,—a lady whom he had formerly addressed in the language of a lover, and with whom he still corresponded as a friend:—

"Bevis Mount,† July, 1735.

"MADAM,—I return you a thousand thanks for your obliging inquiry after my health. I struggle on with doubtful success: one of my strongest motives to do so is, the hopes of seeing you at my cottage before I die, when you either go to Bath or to Mrs. Herbert's.

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* Spence's Anecdotes, p. 13.

† The seat of Lord Peterborough, in Hampshire. Horace Walpole writes to Richard Bentley, Esq. on the 18th of Sep-

"In my most uneasy moments I find amusement in a book, which I therefore send you;* it is one of the most interesting I ever read. I had gathered to myself some notions of the character from pieces of history written in both extremes, but I never expected so agreeable and so fair an account from a priest. In one quarter of an hour, we love and hate the same person without inconstancy. One moment, the Emperor is in possession of our whole heart, and the philosopher fully possessed of our soul; within four or five pages, we blush for our hero, and are ashamed of our philosopher.

"What courage, what presence of mind in

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tember, 1735:—"Going in to Southampton, I passed Bevismount, where my Lord Peterborough

> 'Hung his trophies o'er his garden gate;'

but General Mordaunt was there, and we could not see it: we walked long by moonlight on the terrace along the beach."—*Walpole's Letters*, v. iii, 149. Walpole's quotation, though somewhat mangled, is from a couplet of Pope, in which the poet was thought to allude to the entrance of Lord Peterborough's lawn at Bevismount:—

> "Our generals now, retired to their estate,
> Hang their old trophies o'er the garden gate."

* Apparently, the Life of Julian the Apostate, by the Abbé de la Bléterie, published in 1735.

danger! the first and bravest man in a Roman army; sharing with every soldier the fatigue and danger! The same animal hunting after fortune-tellers, gazing upon the flight of birds, looking into the entrails of beasts with vain curiosity; seeking for cunning women (as we call them) and silly men to give him an account of his destiny, and, if it can be believed, consenting to the highest inhumanities in pursuit of magical experiments.

"Yet, when we come to the last scene, the most prejudiced heart must be softened. With what majesty does the emperor meet his fate! showing how a soldier, how a philosopher, how a friend of Lady Suffolk's ought,—only with juster notions of the Deity,—to die.

"The lady, the book, or both together, have brought me almost into a raving way: I want to make an appointment with you, Mr. Pope, and a few friends more, to meet upon the summit of my Bevis hill, and thence, after a speech and a tender farewell, I shall take my leap towards the clouds, as Julian expresses it, to mix amongst the stars; but I make my bargain for a very fine day, that you may see my last amusements to advantage.

"Wherever be the place, and whenever the time, I shall remain to the utmost possibility, &c.

"PETERBOROUGH."*

It was observed of Lord Peterborough by

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* Suffolk Correspondence, vol. ii. p. 129.

Pope, that "he would neither live nor die like any other mortal." In his last illness he said, alluding to "Bishop Burnet's History of his Own Time," which had recently been published,—"I would willingly live to give that rascal the lie in half his history." The work in question he carried with him when he departed for Lisbon; having already illustrated it with several marginal notes, which, unfortunately, have never been permitted to see the light.

Lord Peterborough died on his passage to Portugal on the 25th day of October, 1735, in his seventy-eighth year. His remains were brought to England, and interred at the ancient seat of his family, Turvey, in Bedfordshire. He was succeeded in his titles by his grandson, Charles Mordaunt, in whose son, Charles Henry Mordaunt, fifth Earl of Peterborough, the earldoms of Peterborough and Mordaunt became extinct.

In person, Lord Peterborough was above the common height, but was so thin that Swift called him a skeleton. "He is a well-shaped thin man," says Macky, "with a very brisk look." The same writer adds:—"He affects popularity, and loves to preach in coffee-houses, and public places; is an open enemy to revealed religion; brave in his person; hath a good estate; does not seem expensive, yet always in debt, and very poor." There is extant a fine portrait of Lord Peterborough by Kneller.

The great Lord Peterborough, in addition to other literary compositions, was the author of his own Memoirs, which his widow, unfortunately, suppressed. Literature must ever regret the loss of such a treasure. Lady Suffolk told Horace Walpole that Lord Peterborough had himself shown her as many as three volumes of his autobiography.

FRANCIS ATTERBURY,

BISHOP OF ROCHESTER.

Educated at Westminster and Oxford.—His literary attainments.—Assists his pupil, C. Boyle, in his dispute with Bentley.—His Jacobitism.—His letter to his father.—His scepticism in early life.—Enters into holy orders.—Marries a lady of fortune.—Appointed chaplain in ordinary to King William.—Enters into a controversy with Dr. Wake.—Created Dean of Westminster and Bishop of Rochester.—His polemical controversies.—The reputed author of the speech made by Sacheverel on his trial.—George the First's accession fatal to Atterbury's ambitious hopes.—His disaffection.—Committal to the Tower.—Speaker Onslow's character of him.—Public sympathy for Atterbury.—His harsh treatment in the Tower.—His letter to Pope.—His eloquent speech on his trial.—Sentence passed on him.—Trial of strength between Atterbury and Sir R. Walpole during the proceedings against the former.—Atterbury quits England and resides chiefly in Paris till his death.—Death of his favourite daughter.—The Duke of Wharton's poetical address to Atterbury.—Atterbury's letter to Dicconson on his daughter's death.—His last meeting with her at Toulouse.—His death at Paris in 1731.—His body brought to England, and the coffin opened by order of Government.—His interment in Westminster Abbey.

This elegant scholar and ambitious churchman was born on the 6th of March, 1662, at his father's rectory at Milton-Keynes, near Newport-Pagnel, in Buckinghamshire. He was educated at Westminster school, from whence he was removed, in 1680, to Christ-Church college, Oxford, where he was indefatigable in his pursuit after knowledge, and very shortly distinguished himself by his classical attainments. As early as 1682, when only in his twenty-first year, he published a Latin version of Dryden's poem of "Absalom and Ahithophel." He translated, also, about the same period, the two exquisite odes of Horace, —"*Donec gratus eram tibi,*" and "*Quem tu Melpomene semel,*" of which odes Scaliger said, that he would sooner have been their author than be King of Arragon. Like all others who have attempted the impossible task of translating Horace, Atterbury has, unquestionably, failed. His versification, however, is not without merit, and, as he is little known as a poet, a single specimen of his muse may not be unacceptable. We prefer giving the following trifle, which he is said to have addressed to the lady whom he afterwards married:—

"On a Lady's Fan.

"Flavia, the least and slightest toy,
Can with resistless art employ.
This fan, in meaner hands, would prove
The engine of small force in love;
Yet she, with graceful air and mien,
Not to be told, or safely seen,
Directs its wanton motions so,
That it wounds more than Cupid's bow;
Gives coolness to the matchless dame,—
To every other breast a flame."

In 1684, Atterbury took his degree of Bachelor of Arts, and in 1687, that of Master of Arts. In the latter year, he published his "Considerations on the spirit of Martin Luther, and the original of the Reformation," and is said also to have materially assisted his pupil, Charles Boyle, afterwards, Earl of Orrery, in his spirited dispute with Bentley, as to the genuineness of the Epistles of Phalaris. Atterbury appears to have instilled into the mind of his pupil, not only his classical taste, but his Jacobite principles. When the Bishop was committed a prisoner to the Tower, in 1722, on account of his presumed intrigues in the cause of the Pretender, he was, shortly afterwards, joined by his old pupil, who was incarcerated on the same charge. The change which had taken place in their habits and principles could not fail to suggest very striking reflections to each of them. The academical seclusion of Christ-Church was exchanged for the dangerous solitude of the Tower; the champion of Martin Luther, and of the principles of the Reformation, had enlisted in the cause of a Roman Catholic Prince; while both tutor and pupil, instead of engaging in classical discussions on the bulls of Phalaris, found themselves far more deeply interested in the proceedings of the Pretender and the bulls of the Pope.

Restless, turbulent, and ambitious; dissatisfied with the small credit to be derived by academical pre-eminence; wearied with conventual rules and habits, and with a society necessarily restricted to the narrow understandings, proverbially generated by a collegiate life, the spirit of Atterbury fretted within the narrow limits of a cloister, and he looked about him for a wider sphere on which to exercise his talents, and for a communion with men whose intellectual faculties were more congenial with his own.

After a residence at the University of about ten years, he writes to his father from Oxford, 14th October, 1690,—"My pupil (Mr. Boyle) I never had a thought of parting with till I left Oxford. I wish I could part with him to-morrow on that score; for I am perfectly wearied with the nauseous circle of small affairs, that can now neither divert nor instruct me. I was made, I am sure, for another scene and another sort of conversation; though it has been my hard luck to be pinned down to this. I have thought and thought again, Sir, and for some years: now I have never been able to think otherwise, than that I am losing time every minute I stay here. The only benefit I ever propose to myself by the place, is studying; and that I am not able to compass. Mr. Boyle takes up half my time; and I grudge it him not, for he is a fine gentleman; and while I am with him, I will do what I can to make him a man. College and University business take up a great deal more; and I am forced to be useful to the Dean in a thousand particulars; so that I have very little time."

Judging from the contents of the foregoing letter, it is, perhaps, not uncharitable to presume that, when Atterbury entered into holy orders the following year, the step was taken rather with a view to temporal aggrandizement, and as offering the means of escaping from the tedious thraldom of a college life, than from any laudable zeal for the sacred profession. We have the authority, indeed, of his friend Pope, that though religion was afterwards the boasted solace of Atterbury in his misfortunes, yet that in early life he was a sceptic. His scepticism, however, seems, at this time, to have been confined to his own breast, for it certainly proved no bar to his preferment. No sooner, indeed, did he appear in the metropolis,—whither he seems to have hastened as offering the best stage on which to display his talents,—than his extraordinary eloquence in the pulpit rapidly brought him into notice and repute. About this period, with the view of advancing his worldly interests, he married a lady named Osborne, a relation of the Duke of Leeds, with whom he received a fortune of 7000*l.*

The first step of any importance which Atterbury obtained in his profession, was the appointment of chaplain in ordinary to King William and Queen Mary; shortly after which he was elected preacher at Bridewell, and lecturer of St. Bride's. A sermon *On the Power of Charity to cover Sin,* which he preached before the governors of Bridewell in 1694, brought him into further notice. It was attacked by Hoadley, afterwards, Bishop of Winchester; while another sermon which he preached the same year, before

Queen Mary at Whitehall, entitled the *Scorner incapable of true Wisdom,* was no less severely commented upon by an anonymous writer. These attacks, added to the fame of his eloquence and to his acknowledged powers as a writer, brought him into great repute; while his celebrity was by no means diminished by a controversy which he entered into, in 1700, with Dr. Wake, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, *On the Rights, Powers, and Privileges of Convocations.* Such was the learning and ingenuity which he displayed during this celebrated dispute, that the Lower House of Convocation voted him their solemn thanks for his " learned pains in asserting and vindicating the rights of convocation," while the University of Oxford conferred on him the degree of Doctor in Divinity. The same year he was installed in the Archdeaconry of Totness.

On the accession of Queen Anne, the continued zeal with which Atterbury had advocated the doctrines of the High-Church, procured him the honours and preferment at which he aimed. He was immediately appointed one of the Queen's chaplains; in October 1704, he was raised to the Deanery of Carlisle;* in 1712, he was appointed Dean of Christ Church, and in June, the following year, was advanced to the Deanery of Westminster and Bishopric of Rochester. During the few years which preceded this last step, his busy and contentious spirit appears to have been seldom at rest. In 1706, he entered into a fresh dispute with Hoadley, concerning the advantages of virtue with regard to the present life, which, in 1707, was followed by another controversy respecting passive obedience. Neither was his pen solely employed in polemical discussions. He was one of the divines engaged to revise an intended edition of the Greek Testament; and, besides being the reputed author of the celebrated speech delivered by Dr. Sacheverel on his trial, he had the principal share in drawing up a once famous document, the "Representation on the present state of the Church and Religion."

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* In 1709, Sir John Trevor made him preacher of the Rolls Chapel, entirely from the admiration which he had conceived of his talents, and the delight with which he had listened to his eloquence in the pulpit.

The elegant taste of Atterbury led him to seek the society, and to become the friend of the wits. He was the intimate companion of Pope, Bolingbroke, Swift, and Gay, and by his social wit and intellectual powers shone forth not the least brilliant luminary in that hemisphere of genius. Gay celebrates him in his Epistle to Pope,—

> "See Rochester approving nods his head,
> And ranks one modern with the mighty dead."

And Pope exclaims in his Epistle to Arbuthnot,—

> "How pleasing Atterbury's softer hour;
> How shines his soul unconquered in the Tower!

It would be interesting to search into the secret history of remarkable friendships. For instance, Atterbury, Bolingbroke, and Pope, were professedly, and are now historically, spoken of as friends. And yet we find Bolingbroke observing of Atterbury, that there is "no man living whom he has less reason to trust:" and when Atterbury had once an opportunity of defending the character of Pope, he chose to shake his head significantly;—"*Mens curva*," he said, "*in corpore curvo*:"—"He has a crooked mind in a crooked body." The former anecdote will be found in the Townshend Papers, the latter in Horace Walpole's Letters.

Of Atterbury's conversational talent and wit, more than one specimen has been recorded. "In 1715," says Dr. King, "I dined with the Duke of Ormond at Richmond. We were fourteen at table. There was my Lord Marr, my Lord Jersey, my Lord Arran, my Lord Lansdowne, Sir William Wyndham, Sir Redmond Everard, and Atterbury, Bishop of Rochester. The rest of the company I do not exactly remember. During the dinner there was a jocular dispute (I forget how it was introduced) concerning short prayers. Sir William Wyndham told us, that the shortest prayer he had ever heard was the prayer of a common soldier, just before the battle of Blenheim, 'O God, if there be a God, save my soul, if I have a soul!' This was followed by a general laugh. I immediately reflected that such a treatment of the subject was too ludicrous, at least very improper, where a learned and religious prelate was one of the company. But I had soon an opportunity of making a different reflection. Atterbury, seeming to join, and applying himself to Sir William Wyndham, said, ‘Your prayer, Sir William, is indeed very short: but I remember another as short, and a much better, offered up likewise by a poor soldier in the same circumstances, ‘O God, if in the day of battle I forget thee, do thou not forget me!’ This, as Atterbury pronounced it with his usual grace and dignity, was a very gentle and polite reproof, and was immediately felt by the whole company. And the Duke of Ormond, who was the best bred man of his age, suddenly turned the discourse to another subject."* The author imagined, on first meeting with this anecdote, that the retort of Atterbury was merely a happy invention of the moment. He has since discovered, however, that it was actually the prayer of a gallant cavalier, Sir Jacob Astley, before the battle of Edgehill, "O Lord," he said, "thou knowest how busy I must be this day: If I forget thee, do not thou forget me." He then rose from his knees, and exclaiming to his men, —"March on, my boys!" led them on to battle.†

Of the ready wit of Atterbury, a still more pleasing instance is related by Dr. King. "Atterbury, when a certain bill was brought into the House of Lords, said, among other things, ‘that he prophesied last winter this bill would be attempted in the present session, and he was sorry to find that he had proved a true prophet.' My Lord Coningsby, who spoke after the bishop, and always spoke in a passion, desired the house to remark, 'that one of the Right Reverend Bishops had set himself forth as a prophet; but for his part he did not know what prophet to liken him to, unless to that furious prophet Balaam, who was reproved by his own ass.' The bishop in reply, with great wit and calmness, exposed this rude attack, concluding thus:—'since the noble Lord hath discovered in our manner such a similitude, I am well content to be compared to the prophet Balaam: but, my Lords, I am at a loss how to make out the other part of the parallel: I am sure that I have been reproved by nobody but his Lordship.'"* Dr. King informs us, that such was the elegance and propriety of Atterbury's language, that if everything which he let fall in common conversation had been committed to writing, it would have been regarded as the model of a beautiful style.

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* Dr. King's Anecdotes of His own Time, p. 7.

† Echard's History of England, vol. ii. p. 351.

The decease of Queen Anne, and the accession of George the First to the throne, proved a deathblow to the ambitious hopes of Atterbury. He was well-known to be attached to the exiled House of Stuart, and, consequently, his dangerous principles and high rank in the church, rendered him peculiarly an object of dislike and distrust. His disaffection, indeed, is said to have proceeded to such lengths, that, on the death of Queen Anne, when statesmen and soldiers alike held back for fear of the consequences, the churchman was the only adherent of the exiled family who boldly proposed to proclaim the Pretender as King of England. Among others whom he endeavoured to gain over to his views was the Lord Chancellor, Simon, Lord Harcourt. According to the statement of that personage, as related in Birch's papers, Atterbury paid him a a visit on the Queen's death, and gave as his opinion, in the present juncture of affairs, that nothing remained but immediately to proclaim King James. He further added that they had only to give him a guard, and he would put on his lawn sleeves and head the procession. "Never," he afterwards exclaimed to a friend, "was a better cause lost for want of spirit."

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* Dr. King's Anecdotes, p. 129.

Some curious evidence in support of these facts was brought forward by Dean Lockier in conversation with Spence. The latter informs us on the authority of the Dean :—"Upon the death of the Queen, the Duke of Ormond, Atterbury and Lord Mareshal, held a private conversation together; in which Atterbury desired the latter to go out immediately, and to proclaim the Pretender in form. Ormond, who was more afraid of consequences, desired to communicate it first to the council. 'Damn it,' says Atterbury, in a great heat, for he did not value swearing, 'you very well know that things have not been concerted enough for that yet, and that we have not a moment to lose.' Indeed it was the only thing they could have done. Such a bold step would have made people believe that they were stronger than they really were, and might have taken strangely. The late King, I am fully persuaded, would not have stirred a foot, if there had been a strong opposition: indeed, the family did not expect this crown; at least nobody in it but the old Princess Sophia."*

Sir Robert Walpole, in a speech delivered some years afterwards in the House of Commons,—observed " Evident proofs will appear of a meeting having been held by some considerable persons, *one of whom is not far off,* wherein it was proposed to proclaim the Pretender at the Royal Exchange." The person to whom allusion is made as *not far off,* was, unquestionably, the Bishop of Rochester, who was referred to as being in his seat in the House of Lords.

The neglect which Atterbury encountered from George the First and his ministry, tended not a little to increase his disaffection to the government. Accordingly, when,—on the landing of the Pretender in Scotland in 1715,—the Archbishop of Canterbury called on the Bishops in and near London to testify their abhorrence of the Rebellion, and to exhort the clergy and people, under their care, to be zealous in the discharge of their duties towards King George, Atterbury boldly opposed himself to the wishes of the Primate, and indeed positively refused to sign the declaration of the Bishops, of their attachment to the crown. At length, after he had secretly intrigued against the existing government for about eight years, the ministry, affirming that they had obtained certain information of his being engaged in a plot in favour of the Pretender, caused him to be apprehended on the charge of high treason. He was seated in his dressing-gown in the Deanery at Westminster, when the Under-Secretary of State, accompanied by one of the messengers of his office, suddenly entered his apartment, and declared him a prisoner of the State. His papers were immediately seized, and Atterbury himself was hurried before the Privy Council at the Cock-pit, by whom, however, he is said to have been treated with the utmost respect. During his examination, he is reported to have replied to a question put to him in the words of our Saviour,—"If I tell you, ye will not believe, and if I also ask you, ye will not answer me, nor let me go."* The investigation lasted three quarters of an hour, and at its conclusion he was ordered to be conveyed to the Tower in his own coach.

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* Mother of George the First. She was the daughter of Frederick, King of Bohemia, by Elizabeth daughter of James the First, King of England. Had she survived Queen Anne, the crown would have descended to her by the act of succession.

The ambition of Wolsey and the High-Church principles of Laud, appear to have centred in the breast of Atterbury. Speaker Onslow observes:—"Atterbury, Bishop of Rochester, was a man of great parts, and of a most restless and turbulent spirit; daring and enterprising, though then very infirm, and capable of any artifice; but proud and passionate, and not of judgment enough for the undertakings he engaged in. His views were not only to be the first Churchman, but the first man also in the State—not less than Wolsey, whom he admired and thought to imitate; and found he could only succeed in this, by the merit of his overturning the present government, and advancing that of the Pretender in its stead." The plot, of which he was accused, is believed to have been communicated to the English government by the Regent Duke of Orleans, who, however, is said to have stipulated that no one should suffer on the scaffold through his means.

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* St. Luke xxii. 67, 68.

The committal of Atterbury to the Tower appears to have excited in the strongest degree the commiseration of the public. On the ground of his being in ill-health,—and it appears that he was really suffering acutely from the gout,—he was publicly prayed for by the clergy in most of the churches of London and Westminster: a print of him also was in circulation, wherein he was represented as looking through the bars of a prison, holding in his hand a portrait of Archbishop Laud, to which were added some verses describing him as,—

"——a second Laud,
Whose Christian courage nothing fears but God."

With reference to the arrest of Atterbury, the following anecdote has been related :—Shortly after the committal of the Bishop to the Tower, some of the leading Whigs discussing in the drawing-room the best means of disposing of him, Lord Cadogan observed, somewhat brutally, —"Fling him to the lions." "The Bishop," says Spence, "was told of this, and soon after, in a letter to Mr. Pope, said that he had fallen upon some verses by chance in his room, which he must copy out for him to read. These were four extremely severe lines against Lord Cadogan ; and, in the last in particular, he called him,—

'A bold, bad, boisterous, blustering, bloody booby.'"

The four lines in question, (a sufficiently fierce tirade considering the author was a Bishop,) are said to have been as follows :—

"By fear ummoved, by shame unawed,
Offspring of hangman and of bawd,
Ungrateful to th' ungrateful man he grew by,
A bold, bad, boisterous, blustering, bloody booby."

Notwithstanding the respect with which Atterbury had been personally treated, when undergoing his examination before the Privy Council, the usage which he afterwards experienced, when a prisoner in the Tower, was, to say the least, disgraceful to the ministry who authorized such cowardly oppression.* Atterbury himself says, in his celebrated trial-speech in the House of Lords,—"I have been under a very long and close confinement, and have been treated with such severity, and so great indignity, as I believe no prisoner in the Tower, of my age and function and rank, ever was; by which means, what strength and use of my limbs I had when I was first committed in August last, is now so far declined, that I am very unfit to make my defence against a bill of such an extraordinary nature. The great weakness of body and mind under which I labour; such usage, such hardships, such insults, as I have undergone, might have broken a more resolute spirit, and much stronger constitution, than falls to my share." This eloquent description of his sufferings and ill-usage, there is no reason to believe exaggerated. It has even been asserted that he was encouraged to write private letters, in order that the contents might afterwards be employed to support the accusation against him. At all events, his favourite daughter was for some time refused admission to him, and even when the restriction was withdrawn, their free communion was interrupted, and all expression of natural feeling repressed, by the presence of one of the underlings of the administration. Moreover, during the early visits paid him by his son-in-law, Mr. Morrice, who came to assist him in preparing his defence,

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* Coxe, in his Life of Sir Robert Walpole, endeavours to exculpate the ministry from the charge of cruelty towards Atterbury : his defence, however, amounts to little more than

the relation of a single act of leniency on their part, and in no degree exonerates them from the harshness of which they have been accused. *Life of Walpole*, vol. i. p. 171.

the Bishop was only allowed to communicate with him from a distance: Atterbury, during their interviews, was compelled to give his direction from a two-pair of stairs window, while Mr. Morrice was standing in an open area below. Among further evidences of the strictness with which he was guarded, and of the precautions taken to prevent his communicating with his friends, it may be mentioned that even some pigeon-pies, which he was in the habit of receiving for his dinner, underwent a rigid examination by order of the government. "It is the first time," writes Pope to Gay, "that *dead* pigeons have been suspected of carrying intelligence."

The following letter, addressed by Atterbury to his friend Pope, during the period of his imprisonment, is not only interesting, owing to the peculiar circumstances under which it was written, but may also be received as a fair specimen of the Bishop's epistolary style :—

"Tower, 10 April, 1723.

"DEAR SIR,—I thank you for all the instances of your friendship, both before and since my misfortunes. A little time will complete them, and separate you and me for ever. But in what part of the world soever I am, I will live mindful of your sincere kindness to me; and will please myself with the thought, that I still live in your esteem and affection as much as ever I did; and that no accidents of life, no distance of time or place, will alter you in that respect. It never can me, who have loved and valued you ever since I knew you, and shall not fail to do it when I am not allowed to tell you so, as the case will soon be. Give my faithful services to Dr. Arbuthnot, and thanks for what he sent me, which was much to the purpose, if anything can be said to be to the purpose in a case that is already determined. Let him know my defence will be such, that neither my friends shall blush for me, nor will my enemies have great occasion of triumph, though sure of the victory. I shall want his advice before I go abroad, in many things. But I question whether I shall be permitted to see him, or anybody, but such as are absolutely necessary towards the dispatch of my private affairs. If so, God bless you both! and may no part of the ill-fortune that attends me ever pursue either of you! I know not but I may call upon you, at my hearing, to say somewhat about my way of spending my time at the Deanery, which did not seem calculated towards managing plots and conspiracies. But of that I shall consider. You and I have spent many hours together upon much pleasanter subjects; and that I may preserve the old custom, I shall not part with you now till I have closed this letter with three lines of Milton, which you will, I know, readily, and not without some degree of concern, apply to your ever affectionate, &c.

" ' Some natural tears he dropped, but wiped them soon,
The world was all before him where to choose
His place of rest, and Providence his guide.' "

On the 9th of April, 1723, a bill passed the House of Commons, proposing the infliction of certain pains and penalties on Francis, Lord Bishop of Rochester, which the same day was carried up to the House of Lords for their concurrence. On the sixth of May, the day fixed upon by the Lords for the first reading of the bill, Atterbury was brought from the Tower to Westminster. The proceedings lasted altogether about a week, at the expiration of which time, the Bishop received permission to plead for himself. It was then that he delivered that celebrated oration, which even the counsel for the prosecution admitted to be almost unrivalled for eloquence, and which, with the exception of Strafford's memorable appeal before a similar tribunal, was, perhaps, the most brilliant and forcible appeal that was ever addressed by a state criminal to his peers.

The principal evidence adduced against Atterbury, and that which had been particularly insisted upon by Pulteney, who drew up the report of the secret committee, was derived from a trifling but somewhat singular incident. The government, it seems, had obtained possession of some treasonable letters, written under the fictitious names of Illington and Jones, in several of which there were allusions to a little dog, about to be sent to *Mrs.* Illington from France. It was by this means that the ministry obtained a clue to the real authors of the correspondence. The animal was traced to the house of a Mrs. Barnes, who, subsequently, underwent an examination before the Privy Council. It appeared by the evidence of this person, that "a spotted little dog, called Harlequin, which was brought from France, and had a leg broken, was left with her to be cured; that the said dog was not for her, but for the Bishop of Rochester; and that one Kelly, who had sent over the dog, had promised to get it of the Bishop of Rochester for her, in case it did not recover of its lameness." This would clearly identify the Bishop and Illington as the same person, and though Atterbury did not condescend to take notice of the circumstance in his defence, it is said to have made no little impression on the minds of his judges. Swift has agreeably ridiculed it in his verses "On the horrid plot discovered by the Bishop of Rochester's French dog:"—

> "Now let me tell you plainly, sir,
> Our witness is a real cur,
> A dog of spirit for his years;
> Has twice two legs, two hanging ears.
> His name is Harlequin, I wot,
> And that's a name in every plot:
> Resolved to save the British nation,
> Though French by birth and education;
> His correspondence, plainly dated,
> Was all deciphered and translated:
> His answers were exceeding pretty
> Before the secret wise committee;
> Confessed as plain as he could bark,
> Then with his fore foot set his mark."

At the period when the House of Lords sentenced Atterbury as a criminal, it may reasonably be questioned whether they had sufficient evidence before them to justify their decision, and whether, if the sentence were a just one, it was, in fact, strictly legal. Documents, indeed, have since been brought to light which sufficiently establish Atterbury's guilt, but still the evidence which they contain was not in the possession of his judges, and, consequently, could in no degree have influenced their decision. It is, principally, on account of the light which they throw on Atterbury's conduct, that these documents are now of value. Considering, indeed, what unquestionable evidence they contain of his criminality, we are not a little startled at the passionate protestations which at his trial he made of his innocence, and the solemnity with which he appealed to heaven for their truth.

A single extract from Atterbury's famous defence may, perhaps, not be unacceptable to the reader. After affecting to ridicule the very existence of the plot, in which he was accused of having been engaged,—"What could tempt me," he says, "to step thus out of my way? Was it ambition, and a desire of climbing into an higher station in the Church? There is not a man in my office farther removed from this than I am. Was money my aim? I always despised it too much, considering what occasion I am now like to have for it; for out of a poor bishopric of five hundred pounds per annum, I have laid out no less than a thousand pounds towards the repairs of the church and episcopal palace; nor did I take one shilling for dilapidations. The rest of my little income has been spent as is necessary, as I am a Bishop. Was I influenced by any dislike of the established religion, and secretly inclined towards a Church of greater pomp and power? I have, my Lords, ever since I knew what Popery was, opposed it; and the better I knew it, the more I opposed it. I began my study in divinity when the Popish controversy grew hot, with that immortal book of Tillotson's, when he undertook the Protestant cause in general; and as such, I esteemed him above all. You will pardon me, my Lords, if I mention one thing: thirty years ago I wrote in defence of Martin Luther, and have preached, expressed, and wrote to that purpose from my infancy; and, whatever happens to me, I will suffer anything, and, by God's grace, burn at the stake, rather than depart from any material point of the Protestant religion, as professed in the Church of England."*

The Bishop concludes his appeal as follows:—"If, on any account, there shall still be thought by your Lordships to be any seeming strength in the proofs against me,—if, by your Lordship's judgments, springing from unknown motives,—if, for any reasons or necessity of state, of the wisdom and justice of which I am no competent judge,—your Lordships shall proceed to pass this bill against me, I shall dispose myself quietly and tacitly to submit to what you do. God's will be done: naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return; and whether he gives or takes away, blessed be the name of the Lord!"

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* Even the worst enemies of Atterbury admit that he never swerved from the principles of the Reformed religion. "He reprobated with warmth," says Coxe, "the conduct of the Duke of Wharton, Lords North and Grey, and others, who had sacrificed their religion with a view to obtain the Pretender's favour; he even quarrelled with the Duke of Berwick, who proposed giving a Catholic preceptor to the young Duke of Buckingham, and used his influence over the Duchess to place none but Protestants about the person of her son."—*Coxe's Life of Sir Robert Walpole,* v. i, p. 174.

The bishop's speech, according to his own computation and that of Pope, lasted two hours. On the following Monday, he was again brought from the Tower, to hear the rejoinder of the King's counsel, and three days afterwards, on the 16th of May, after a vehement opposition from his own party, the Bill, declaring him guilty of high treason, passed the House of Lords, by a majority of eighty-three to forty-three. Agreeably with its provisions, he was deprived of all his benefices; declared incapable of exercising any office, and enjoying any dignity, within the King's dominions; and sentenced to be exiled for life. He was even debarred from the society of his countrymen residing abroad; the Bill providing, that whoever should hold any correspondence with him, unless licensed under the King's sign manual, should be adjudged felons, without the benefit of clergy.

The following interesting anecdote, which has reference both to Atterbury's imprisonment in the Tower, and to his presumed scepticism in regard to revealed religion, was frequently related by Lord Chesterfield, in conversation with his friends:—"I went," he said, "to Mr. Pope, one morning, at Twickenham, and found a large folio Bible, with gilt clasps, lying before him upon his table; and, as I knew his way of thinking upon that book, I asked him jocosely, if he was going to write an answer to it? It is a present, said he, or rather a legacy, from my old friend, the Bishop of Rochester. I went to take my leave of him yesterday in the Tower, where I saw this Bible upon his table. After the first compliments, the bishop said to me,—'My friend, Pope, considering your infirmities, and my age and exile, it is not likely that we should ever meet again; and, therefore, I give you this legacy to remember me by it. Take it home with you, and let me advise you to abide by it.'—'Does your lordship abide by it yourself?'—'I do.'—'If you do, my lord, it is but lately. May I beg to know what new light or arguments have prevailed with you now, to entertain an opinion so contrary to that which you entertained of that book all the former part of your life?' The bishop replied: 'We have not time to talk of these things; but take home the book, I will abide by it; and I will recommend to you to do so too, and so God bless you!'"* Dr. Johnson, in his Life of Pope, incidentally mentions Atterbury presenting the poet with a Bible, at their last interview in the Tower, but seems to have been ignorant of the interesting circumstances connected with the gift. Pope once said of Atterbury in a moment of unusual tenderness,—"Perhaps it is not only in this world that I may have cause to remember the Bishop of Rochester."

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* Lord Chesterfield's Works, by Maty, vol. i, p. 279.

We have already seen Atterbury writing to his friend Pope, intimating that he might possibly require his evidence at his trial. The poet, it seems, was actually summoned as a witness; a circumstance which appears to have caused him some embarrassment. Alluding, sometime afterwards, to his having been present at the trial,—"I never could speak in public," he says, "and I do not believe that, if it was a set thing, I could give an account of any story to twelve friends together; though I could tell it to any three of them with a great deal of pleasure. When I was to appear for the Bishop of Rochester on his trial, though I had but ten words to say, and that on a plain, easy point,—how that bishop spent his time while I was with him at Bromley,—I made two or three blunders in it; and that, notwithstanding the first row of Lords, which were all I could see, were mostly of my acquaintance."*

But, perhaps, the most remarkable event which took place during the proceedings against Atterbury, was a trial of strength between the bishop and the prime minister, Sir Robert Walpole; the latter, probably by his own contrivance, having been summoned as a witness for the prosecution. Speaker Onslow observes in his "Remarks on various parts of Sir Robert Walpole's conduct" —"The bishop used all the art his guilt would admit of, to perplex and make Walpole contradict himself; but he was too hard for the bishop upon every turn, although a greater trial of skill this way, scarce ever happened between two such combatants. The one, fighting for his reputation, the other for his acquittal. The expectation of people in it, as they were differently inclined to the parties, and the cause and solemnity of it, from the place and the audience it was in, made it look like a listed field for a combat of another sort, and the joy of victory as great as there."

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* Spence's Anecdotes, p. 11.

On the 18th of June, 1723, Atterbury bade farewell for ever to his country. Accompanied by his favourite daughter, Mrs. Morrice, he embarked on board the "Aldborough," man-of-war, from which vessel he was landed at Calais. Sir Robert Walpole writes to Townshend on the 20th of the month,—"The Bishop of Rochester went away on Tuesday. The crowd that attended him before his embarkation, was not more than was expected; but great numbers of boats attended him to the ship's-side. Nothing very extraordinary, but the Duke of Wharton's behaviour, who went on board the vessel with him; and a free conversation betwixt his holiness and Williamson;* with menaces of a day of vengeance." A popular commotion, it seems, had been apprehended by the ministry, but the affair passed off quietly, and without the slightest tumult.

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* The Governor of the Tower.

The Duke of Wharton, it may be remarked, in addition to defending Atterbury in a magnificent speech in the House of Lords, commemorated his exile in a copy of verses of some merit,—

"Farewell! renowned in arts farewell!
  Thus conquered by thy foe;
Of honours and of friends deprived,
  In exile must thou go:
Yet go content; thy look, thy will sedate,
Thy soul superior to the shocks of state.

Thy wisdom was thy only guilt,
  Thy virtue thy offence;
With god-like zeal thou didst espouse
  Thy country's just defence;
Nor sordid hopes could charm thy steady soul,
Nor fears nor guilty numbers could control."

From Calais, Atterbury proceeded, in the first instance, to Brussels and thence to Paris, in which capital he continued principally to reside till his death. Here, he formed acquaintance with the most distinguished men of letters in France; in whose society he was enabled at times to forget that he was an exile, and to escape from a melancholy communion with his own thoughts. The turbulent spirit of Atterbury was, indeed, far from being at rest. Like his friend, Bolingbroke, he boasted a serenity of mind which he did not experience, and preached a philosophy which he was unable to practise. At the very time, when he was vaunting the consolation which he derived from religion and books, and when his loyalty to King George, and his respect for the existing institutions of his native country, formed the topics on which he principally dwelt in his private letters to his friends, we have now certain evidence to prove that he was secretly corresponding with the partisans of the Pretender, and devoting his whole energies to advance the cause of that unfortunate Prince.*

Atterbury, notwithstanding his many faults, was a person of strong affections, and, latterly, all the tenderness of his nature was centred in his beloved daughter, Mrs. Morrice, who accompanied him in his exile, and tended him in his old age. The death of this amiable woman, who expired in his arms, in the latter part of 1729, affected him in the most sensible manner. Separated from his own family, and debarred from the society of his countrymen, the once splendid, and admired Atterbury was left, by this bereavement, almost alone among strangers, and was condemned to pass the brief remainder of his long life in a manner which might have excited the commiseration of even his enemies.

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* These facts are proved, 1st, by the Bishop's correspondence with the rebels in Scotland, published by Sir David Dalrymple: 2ndly, by the accounts received by the English government, from their spies at Paris: 3rdly, from Atterbury's private letters to his son-in-law, Mr. Morrice, published by Coxe, in his supplementary volumes of the Life of Sir Robert Walpole; and, lastly, from a particular letter, addressed by the Bishop to Mr. Morrice, in which, in 1728, he mentions that he has quitted the service of the Pretender, not from principle, but from disgust. See, also, some very curious letters, transcribed from the Stuart Papers, in Lord Mahon's Hist. of Eng. vol. ii. Appendix.

It is impossible to read, without emotion, the following passage, in which Atterbury communicates to his friend, Mr. Dicconson, the tidings of his daughter's decease. The passage in question occurs in a letter dated Montpelier, 4th December, 1729. "I have your letter of the 15th November, and am much obliged to you for the friendly concern you express in it. As to the article of my poor daughter, of whom, seven days before the date of it, God was pleased to deprive me, upon a melancholy but comfortable meeting I had with her at Toulouse, where she survived her arrival twenty-four hours, and spent that little time that was left her in such a manner as will make her memory ever dear and valuable to me. I thought nothing could have added to the affection and esteem I had for her, but I found myself mistaken in those last moments when she took her leave of me. She is gone and I must follow her. When I do, may my latter end be like hers! It was my business to have taught her to die; instead of it, she has taught me. I am not ashamed, and I wish I may be able, to learn that lesson of her. What I feel upon her loss, is not to be expressed, but the reflection on the manner of it makes me some amends. God has tempered the severity of the one by the circumstances of the other, and has dealt with me, as in the rest of his inflictions, so as, together with the great burden he laid on me, to enable me at the same time in some measure to bear it."

In a letter from a Mr. Evans, who had accompanied Mrs. Morrice and her husband from England, we find the following passage:—"It was well worth my while to have taken so long a voyage, though I was immediately to return home again, and reap no other benefit from it than seeing what passed in the last hours of Mrs. Morrice." The fact is a striking and painful one, that not only did the last melancholy meeting between Atterbury and his expiring daughter take place in a land of strangers, but the permission granted them to meet once more was wrung from the English ministry only by the most humble solicitations on the part of the exiled prelate, and on payment of very large and inconvenient fees of office. When Mrs. Morrice obtained permission to embrace her father for the last time, consumption had made such terrible ravages in her constitution that she was unable to undergo the fatigues of a land journey. She proceeded as far as Bourdeaux by sea, (the Bishop being then at Toulouse expecting her,) but was so exhausted on reaching the land, that it seemed unlikely she would be reserved for further exertions. It had been her earnest prayer that she might be permitted to behold her father once more, and that prayer was granted. Ill as she was, she ventured all night up the river Garonne, and the next morning was in the presence of her father at Toulouse. Twenty-four hours afterwards she expired in his arms.

The Bishop, it may be remarked, in addition to the misfortunes of proscription and exile, had already had occasion to lament the loss of a wife and three children. His only remaining issue was the Rev. Osborne Atterbury, Rector of Oxhill, in Warwickshire.

Atterbury expired at Paris on the 15th of February, 1731, in his sixty-ninth year, surviving the loss of his beloved daughter only fifteen months. His body was brought to England, and it may be mentioned as a curious circumstance, that the hearse which contained his remains was stopped in its progress to the metropolis, and the coffin opened by order of the Government. The circumstance occasioned a great outcry at the time. It was affirmed, however, by the partisans of the ministry, that the outrage was solely the act of the custom-house officers, who had obtained information that some brocades, and other prohibited articles of foreign manufacture, were concealed in the coffin. The remains of Atterbury were interred, on the 12th of May, 1731, in the sacred repository of departed genius, Westminster Abbey. The country, which had rejected him when living, seemed proud to receive his ashes when dead.

MRS. MASHAM.

Abigail Hill, afterwards Mrs. Masham, daughter of Mr. Hill, a Turkey merchant.—Placed as a waiting-woman with Lady Rivers.—Her relationship to the Duchess of Marlborough, who places her in the Queen's household.—Anecdote of her related by the Duchess.—The latter's communication to Bishop Burnet.—Extract from the Duchess's memoirs.—Her kindness to the Hill family.—Abigail Hill's marriage to Mr. Masham, Gentleman of the Bed-Chamber to Prince George of Denmark.—Queen Anne present at the ceremony.—Extracts from the Duchess of Marlborough's memoirs.—The Duke's remarks on Mrs. Masham's influence.—His letter to the Queen.—Brief account of Mr. Masham.—He is created Baron Masham of Otes.—Lord Dartmouth's and Swift's opinions of Mrs. Masham.—She retires with her husband, on the death of the Queen, to her seat at Otes.—John Locke their guest for two years.—Mrs. Masham's death in 1734.

It is remarkable how little is known of this celebrated woman,—who, from an almost menial situation, rose to be the favourite of her sovereign,—who governed both Queen Anne and her counsels,—who expelled ministries, and gave birth to others almost at her will,—and who, without positive talent, or, apparently, merit of any sort, could boast that she had on more than one occasion changed the destinies of Europe.

The maiden name of Mrs. Masham was Hill. She was the daughter of a Mr. Hill, a

Turkey merchant; and, according to Lord Dartmouth, who was well acquainted with her, had originally been a "waiting-woman" to a Lady Rivers, in Kent.* She was an indigent relation of the Duchess of Marlborough; a circumstance which, added to the general propriety of her conduct, her apparent humility, and a character which she had obtained of being a peculiarly trustworthy person, appear to have induced the Duchess to place her relative near the Queen. It was an act of good nature which she very shortly had reason to repent; and, in after years, any allusion to the "incurable baseness" of Mrs. Masham,—almost the very mention of the name of the aspiring bedchamber-woman,—was sufficient to throw the Duchess into a tempest of rage. "After I brought this woman into the Court," observes her Grace, "she always had a shy, reserved behaviour towards me; always avoided entering into a free conversation, and made excuses when I asked her to go abroad with me. And what I thought, then, ill-breeding, or surly honesty, has since proved to be a design deeply laid, as she had always the artifice to hide very carefully the power and influence she had over the Queen, an instance of which I remember, when I was with the Queen at Windsor, and went through my own lodgings a private way and unexpected. She unlocked the door in a loud familiar manner, and was tripping across the room with a gay air, but upon seeing me, she immediately stopped short, and acting a part like a player, dropped a grave curtsey, and when she had gone a good way without making any, and, in a faint, low voice, cried,—'Did your Majesty ring, pray?'"* The reflection, indeed, must have been not a little provoking to the imperious Duchess, that she had not only been out-manœuvred by her humble kinswoman, but owed her own fall, and that of her husband, to the machinations of a woman whom she affected to have raised from the dirt.

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* Burnet's History of his Own Time, note by Lord Dartmouth, vol. vi. p. 36. The assertion that Mrs. Masham had been a "waiting-woman" to Lady Rivers, is corroborated by a statement of Coxe. "Abigail," he says, "was so reduced, as to enter into the service of Lady Rivers, wife of Sir John Rivers, Bart., of Chafford, in Kent, as I was informed by the late John Rivers, Esq. She was raised from her humble situation by the Duchess."—*Coxe's Life of the Duke of Marlborough*, vol. ii. p. 257, note.

Amongst the mass of acrimonious abuse with which the Duchess, alike in her memoirs and her private letters, invariably loads the name of her rival, we occasionally find some curious particulars relating to Mrs. Masham. To Bishop Burnet, who had apparently applied to her for some addition to the stock of agreeable scandal which he was preparing for posterity, the Duchess,—anxious, on all occasions, that her name should stand well with posterity,—thus eagerly replies;—"You inquire into the ground of favour to the Hills. I can only tell you, that I did not know there were such people till about twenty years ago, when I was told by an acquaintance that I had relations that were in want; and that this woman was a daughter of my father's sister.* My father had in all two and twenty brothers and sisters, and though I am very little concerned about pedigrees or family, I know not why I should not tell you that his was reckoned a good one, and that he had in Somersetshire, Kent, and St. Albans, four thousand pounds a year. However, it was not strange, that when the children were so many, their portions were small, and that one of them married this Mr. Hill, who had some business in the city, rather as a merchant or proprietor, and was someway related to Mr. Harley, and by profession an Anabaptist. From the time I knew their condition, I helped them every way as much as I could, to which I had no motive but charity and relationship."†

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* Private Correspondence of Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, vol. ii. p. 112.

The Duchess, in her Memoirs, introduces some further, and no less interesting particulars respecting the early history of Mrs. Masham, and her own share in establishing the fortunes of the future favourite. After again adverting to their relationship, she adds, that she has been informed, on good authority, that her uncle Hill "lived very well" in the city, till he turned projector, when his indiscretions entailed ruin on his family. "But," proceeds the Duchess, "as this was long before I was born, I never knew there were such people in the world till after the Princess Anne was married, and when she lived at the Cock-pit, at which time an acquaintance of mine came to me, and said she believed I did not know that I had relations who were in want, and she gave me an account of them. When she had finished her story, I answered, that indeed I had never heard before of any such relations, and immediately gave her out of my purse ten guineas for their present relief, saying I would do what I could for them."

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* It appears by this statement that the Duchess of Marlborough and Mrs. Masham were first cousins.

† Correspondence of the Duchess of Marlborough, v. ii. p. 111.

If the statements of the Duchess are to be relied upon, (and, though her pictures are, occasionally, highly coloured, there is no reason for questioning the truth of her assertions,) she behaved in the most exemplary manner towards her poor relations, and extended to them the kindness of which they stood so greatly in need. She appears to have frequently relieved the necessities of Mrs. Hill; while the subject of the present memoir, then a young and unmarried woman, appears to have been particularly honoured by her notice and regard. "The elder daughter, afterwards Mrs. Masham," says the Duchess, "was a grown woman. I took her to St. Albans, where she lived with me and my children; and I treated her with as great kindness as if she had been my sister. After some time, a bedchamber-woman of the Princess of Denmark's died, and as, in that reign, after the Princesses were grown up, rockers, though not gentlewomen, had been advanced to be bedchamber-women, I thought I might ask the Princess to give the vacant place to Mrs. Hill. At first, indeed, I had some scruple about it; but this being removed by persons I thought wiser, with whom I consulted, I made the request to the Princess, and it was granted."

Neither did her charity stop here. For an elder brother of Mrs. Masham she procured a place in the Custom House, and even induced a relation of the Duke of Marlborough to become security for him to the amount of two thousand pounds. A younger brother, afterwards well known among his contemporaries as "Jack Hill," she placed at a school at St. Albans, and though the Duchess admits, or rather affirms, that he was "good for nothing," she persuaded the Duke of Marlborough to take him as his aide-de-camp, and subsequently to confer on him a regiment. There now remained but one of her uncle's children to provide for. This was a younger daughter, for whom she procured an appointment as laundress in the household of the young Duke of Gloucester; and on the death of that promising scion of royalty, obtained for her a pension of two hundred a year.

These were no trifling benefits to confer on one family. The account, indeed, is taken from the statement of the Duchess herself, but there exists no reason to believe that she has exaggerated her philanthropy. Coxe, indeed, informs us, that there are preserved among the Marlborough Papers several letters from Mrs. Hill, the mother of Mrs. Masham, which teem with the warmest expressions of gratitude for the kindness of the Duchess, and prove, beyond doubt, that she procured places or establishments for the children of her widowed aunt.*

Among the letters of expostulation which, after her loss of power, the Duchess frequently addressed to her royal mistress, there is one in which she particularly vaunts the favours conferred by her on her rival. Speaking of her "cousin Hill," she says,—"I have several letters under her hand to acknowledge that never any family had received such benefits as hers had done from me; which I will keep to show the world what returns she has made for obligations that she was sensible of." As the Queen was certain to display this passage to her new favourite, it is needless to add, that unless the Duchess had really conferred many important benefits on her ungrateful kinswoman, she would scarcely have boasted of them in so confident a manner.

On the other hand, it must be observed in justice to Mrs. Masham, that the account which the Duchess gives of her own munificence, and the picture which she draws of the ingratitude of her relative, constitute after all but an ex-parte statement. Admitting even the correctness of her Grace's assertion; allowing her the credit of having freely administered to the wants of a suffering family, and of having raised its members from comparative indigence and obscurity; it still becomes a question how far the haughty Duchess may have been influenced by family pride, and whether she may not have cancelled the obligation by subsequent unkindness, or by the proud and patronizing manner in which her favours were conferred. From the insight which we possess into the character of the Duchess, it is far from improbable that she assumed the part of a "Lady Bountiful,"—that she exacted on all occasions a due equivalent for her charity, and by treating her cousin, (at the time when she was a member of her household) rather as a dependant than a friend, purchased for herself the hatred, instead of the gratitude, of her future rival.

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* Coxe's Life of the Duke of Marlborough, v. ii. p. 257, note.

Mrs. Masham, it appears, had for many months been gradually undermining the Duchess of Marlborough in the affections of their royal mistress, long before the Duchess conceived the remotest suspicion that her influence was in danger. At length a particular circumstance served to enlighten her on the subject. Mrs. Masham, who, up to this period (1707), was merely regarded as plain Abigail Hill, one of the Queen's dressers, had formed an attachment for Mr. Masham, one of the gentlemen of the bedchamber to Prince George of Denmark. Masham, it seems, from motives of self-interest, rather than from any feeling of regard for the lady's person, was induced to make her an offer of his hand; moreover, by the advice of the insidious Harley, the Queen was made the confidant of their amours, with the understanding that the Duchess of

Marlborough was to be excluded from all knowledge of the affair. Not, indeed, that there existed any reasonable ground for making a matrimonial engagement between a gentleman of the bed-chamber and a royal waiting-woman a matter of state importance; more especially as both parties seem to have been very equally matched in rank and fortune; but Harley, at this juncture, was deep in female jealousies and intrigues; he was aware of the habitual awe, mingled with increasing dislike, with which the Queen regarded the Duchess of Marlborough; it was his object to accustom his royal mistress to resistance, in order to extricate her from the trammels in which she was entangled; and, with this object, he sought to implicate her in a private transaction, in which, for the first time since the commencement of her long intercourse with the Duchess, the Queen should be induced to engage without the knowledge of her domineering favourite. The result fully answered the expectations of the designing statesman; Anne not only signified her approval of the marriage, but consented to be present at its celebration. The ceremony was performed in the apartments of Dr. Arbuthnot, in the most private manner; no other person except the Queen being present.

When, in the course of time, the report of this secret marriage became matter of Court gossip, the Duchess, who was as yet ignorant of the Queen's share in the transaction, immediately hastened with pretended congratulations to her relative. "I went to her," says the Duchess, "and asked her if it were true: she owned it was, and begged my pardon for having concealed it from me. As much reason as I had to take ill this reserve in her behaviour, I was willing to impute it to bashfulness and want of breeding, rather than to anything worse. I embraced her with my usual tenderness, and very heartily wished her joy; and then, turning the discourse, entered into her concerns in as friendly a manner as possible. I then inquired of her, very kindly, whether the Queen knew of her marriage, and very innocently offered her my service, if she needed it, to make that matter easy. She had, by this time, learnt the art of dissimulation pretty well, and answered with an air of unconcernedness, that the bedchamber-women had already acquainted the Queen with it." The suspicions of the Duchess appear, by this time, to have been fully aroused. She immediately went to the Queen, and, warming probably into one of her not unfrequent paroxysms of rage, "expostulated" with her Majesty on the silence which she had maintained. "But," says the Duchess, "all the answer I could obtain from her Majesty was this, —'I have a hundred times bid Mrs. Masham tell it you and she would not.'"

"The conduct both of the Queen and Mrs. Masham," adds the Duchess, "convinced me that there was some mystery in the affair, and thereupon I set myself to inquire as particularly as I could into it. And in less than a week's time, I discovered that my cousin was become an absolute favourite; that the Queen herself was present at her marriage in Dr. Arbuthnot's lodgings, at which time her Majesty had called for a round sum out of the Privy Purse; that Mrs. Masham came often to the Queen, when the Prince was asleep, and was generally two hours every day in private with her. And I, likewise, then discovered, beyond all dispute, Mr. Harley's correspondence and interest at court by means of this woman. I was struck with astonishment at such an instance of ingratitude, and should not have believed it, if there had been any room left for doubting." No wonder that the Duchess was struck with astonishment and alarm. From the hour that the Queen first listened with complacency to the insinuating arguments of the humble dresser, the power of the haughty and insolent Duchess, of her illustrious husband, and of the entire Whig party, was virtually, if not actually, at an end.

There is something almost amounting to simplicity, in the manner in which the Duke of Marlborough replies to the representations of his Duchess, that Mrs. Masham was stealthily supplanting her in the affections of the Queen. Apparently unable to conceive the possibility that one, whom he had as yet merely known as a poor dependant, could dream of jostling him in his career of greatness, he writes to his indignant Duchess, on the 3rd of June, 1707, — "If you are sure that Mrs. Masham speaks of business to the

Queen, I should think you might, with some caution, tell her of it, which would do good. For she certainly must be grateful and will mind what you say." As if a few words spoken in caution could stop a headstrong woman in her career of ambition and intrigue! The Duke lived to trace his own fall and that of his party to the machinations of this apparently innocuous female; indeed, only ten months after the date of the foregoing letter, we find his language in speaking of the favourite, of a very different character. In April, the following year, he writes to his Duchess from the Hague,—"The credit of Mrs. Masham occasions a good deal of disagreeable discourse in this country," and, again, in another letter he styles her, amusingly, a "viper."

But a communication which he, subsequently, addressed to the Queen, (in which he haughtily deprecates the preference that she showed for her new favourite,) evinces how deeply wounded and how indignant were his feelings. Speaking of one of the numerous insults and injuries which he had experienced at the hands of Harley and Mrs. Masham,—"This," he observes, "is only one of a great many mortifications that I have met with; and as I may not have many opportunities of writing to you, let me beg of your Majesty to reflect what your own people, and the rest of the world, must think, who have been witnesses of the love, zeal and duty, with which I have served you, when they shall see that, after all, I have done, it has not been able to protect me against the malice of a bedchamber-woman."*

It may be questioned whether, had the Queen lived, Mrs. Masham would have continued to retain her influence over her sovereign. Swift writes from Windsor in September, 1711;—"Mrs. Masham is better, and will be here in three or four days: she had need, for the Duchess of Somerset is thought to gain ground daily."† Lord Dartmouth says,—"She grew to be very rude and jealous, which I took no notice of; but the Queen had a suspicion that she, or her sister, listened at the door all the time I was with her; which, with some disrespects shown to the Duchess of Somerset, gave her Majesty some thoughts of making of her a lady of the bedchamber, and laying of her down softly." "I was desired," adds Lord Dartmouth, "to propose her husband's being made a peer, which I found was not very acceptable. The Queen told me she never had any design to make a great lady of her, and should lose a useful servant about her person; for it would give offence to have a peeress lie upon the floor,‡ and do several other inferior offices; but at last consented, upon condition she remained a dresser, and did as she used to do."

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* Coxe's Life of the Duke of Marlborough, vol. iii. p. 153.

† Journal to Stella, 20th Sept. 1711.

‡ It is evident, from this passage, that the ancient custom of a person sleeping across the doorway of the royal bedchamber was continued even as late as the reign of Queen Anne.

Of the private character of Mrs. Masham,—whether her virtues or her vices preponderated,—we have, unfortunately, no faithful record. Lord Dartmouth (who, however, admits that he lived on bad terms with the favourite,) observes,—"She was exceeding mean and vulgar in her manners; of a very unequal temper; childishly exceptious, and passionate." Swift, on the other hand, draws a very pleasing portrait of Mrs. Masham;—"She was a person," he says, "of a plain sound understanding, of great truth and sincerity, without the least mixture of falsehood or disguise; of an honest boldness and courage to her sex; firm and disinterested in her friendship; and full of love, duty, and veneration for the Queen, her mistress; talents as seldom found as sought for in a Court, as unlikely to thrive while they are there."* Mesnager, also, in his "Minutes of the Negotiations at the Court of England," speaks of her in the highest terms, and adds that he knows no woman more worthy to be the favourite of a Queen. It seems to be questionable whether her person was ever agreeable. Swift, in recording his first introduction to her, observes;—"I dined to-day at Lord Treasurer's with Mrs. Masham, and she is extremely like one Mrs. Malolly, that was my landlady in Trim: she was used with mighty kindness and respect, like a favourite." From the numerous notices of her by Swift, who was afterwards frequently thrown into her society, we glean little more than that she was an affectionate mother to her children, and that she had no objection to a game of piquet with the Dean.

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* "Inquiry into the Behaviour of the Queen's last Ministry."

On the death of Queen Anne, Lady Masham and her husband retired to their seat at Otes, where the immortal philosopher, John Locke, spent ten years of his life as their guest. Locke, it may be remarked, breathed his last at Otes, and, at his own desire, was buried in the churchyard of that place.

Of the husband of Mrs. Masham it may be necessary to say a few words. Samuel, younger son of Sir Francis Masham, Bart., had originally been a page of honour to Queen Anne, and subsequently held the appointments of equerry and gentleman of the bedchamber to the Prince of Denmark. He was related, not very distantly, to the Cromwells.* Prince George obtained for him the command of a regiment, and the rank of a brigadier-general, in addition to which, he was subsequently appointed cofferer of the household, and obtained a reversionary grant of the office of Remembrancer of the Exchequer, to which place he succeeded on the 23rd of October, 1716, on the death of Simon, Lord Fanshawe.

The influence of Mrs. Masham with the Queen procured her husband's elevation to the peerage. On the 31st of December, 1711, he was created

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* See Noble's Protectorate, vol. ii. p. 55.

Baron Masham of Otes, in Essex, having, a short time previously, succeeded his nephew as fourth Baronet.

Lady Masham was the mother of four children:—George, who died in the life-time of his father:—Samuel, who succeeded to the title, and at whose death, in 1776, the barony became extinct:—Francis, who died young;—and Anne, married to Henry Hoare, Esq., and mother of Susannah, Countess of Aylesbury. Lady Masham died on the 6th December, 1734, having survived her husband about fourteen months. They were both buried at Otes.

ROBERT FIELDING,

BEAU FIELDING.

Beau Fielding, the "Orlando" of the Tatler.—Descended from an old Warwickshire family.—Sent to London to study the Law.—His great personal beauty and foppish habits.—His extraordinary popularity with the fair sex.—His success as a gambler.—Fantastic liveries of his servants.—Portraits of him by the three great Artists of the day.—His first wife, daughter and heiress of Lord Carlingford.—His second, the celebrated Duchess of Cleveland, Mistress of Charles the Second.—Their matrimonial unhappiness.—Duchess's discovery that he had committed bigamy.—He is tried at the Old Bailey.—Singular evidence adduced at the trial respecting Fielding's intrigues to obtain the hand of a rich widow, Deleau.—Curious statement made by the Counsel for the prosecution.—Evidence of Mrs. Villars, and of Fielding's servant, Boucher.—Fielding found guilty, but afterwards pardoned by Queen Anne.—His marriage with the Duchess of Cleveland annulled.

The history of a fine gentleman of the reign of Queen Anne, as it throws an amusing light on the manners of the period, may not be unacceptable to the reader.

Robert Fielding, the "Orlando" of the Tatler, was a cadet of a good family in Warwickshire, and, at an early age, was sent to London for the purpose of studying the law. Vanity, however, and a taste for dissipation, gradually weaned him from his professional pursuits, and when, on an occasion of his appearing at court, his sovereign spoke of him, *par excellence*, as "the handsome Fielding," the circumstance is said to have stamped him for ever as a fop. Granger speaks of him as "uncommonly beautiful," and if we are to judge from the notices of him by his contemporaries, the encomium scarcely appears to be exaggerated.

Popular with the fair sex, almost beyond precedent, the sums which he received for conferring his favours on the old, he is said to have lavished profusely on the young. The gaming-table also afforded him occasional means of subsistence, and, though a vice which rarely enriches its votaries, he is said, as a gamester, to have proved unusually successful. Whatever may have been the secret means of his subsistence, he figured for a series of years, in his proper sphere, the metropolis, in dazzling, though borrowed plumes; and, by the splendour of his dress, and the fantastic liveries of his servants, appears to have never failed in attracting public attention. His domestics are described as habited in yellow liveries, with black sashes, and black feathers in their hats. One circumstance is curious, and, moreover, affords tolerable evidence of Fielding's self-love, that he caused himself to be painted by the three great artists of their time, Lely, Wissing, and Kneller. All three of their portraits have been engraved.

The first wife of Fielding was the daughter and sole heiress of Barnham Swift, Lord Carlingford. On the death of this lady, trusting, as usual, to retrieve his fortunes by his handsome person, he paid his addresses to the celebrated Duchess of Cleveland, formerly the dazzling and scornful mistress of Charles the Second, but who, at this period, must have been verging on her sixty-sixth year. They were married on the 25th of November, 1705, and, as is usually the case where there exists such glaring disparities of age and character, their union proved unhappy in the extreme. The reflection, indeed, cannot fail to be a melancholy one, that a woman who (profligate and undeserving as she is admitted to have been,) had formerly enslaved a powerful sovereign, and made him subservient to her slightest caprice, should not only so far have demeaned herself as to become the wife of a needy adventurer, but should eventually have been compelled to seek refuge from his violence in a court of law.

Fortunately, the Duchess, under somewhat remarkable circumstances, was afforded an opportunity of extricating herself from her matrimonial engagements. She had been united to her dissipated husband about a year, when rumours, in the first instance, reached her that Fielding had already another wife alive, and, some time afterwards, a female actually made her appearance at Cleveland House, who stoutly maintained the priority of her claim. An inquiry was immediately instituted by the friends of the Duchess, of which the result was a determination to prosecute Fielding for bigamy. Accordingly, on the 4th of December, 1706, he was placed at the bar of the Old Bailey, charged, in a formal indictment, with having intermarried Barbara, Duchess of Cleveland, his former wife, Mary Wadsworth, being still alive. From the evidence elicited at the trial, there transpired the singular fact that Fielding, within the short space of sixteen days, had been united to two different women. His marriage with Mary Wadsworth took place on the 9th of November, 1705; his union with the Duchess of Cleveland on the 25th of the same month.

The circumstances connected with the case render it not a little amusing, and perhaps will excuse our introducing them somewhat in detail. It appears, then, that a young widow, a Mrs. Deleau, had been left, or was reputed to have been left, a large fortune, and that Fielding, tempted by the rumours of her wealth, had conceived the project of making her his wife. As yet he was unacquainted with even her person; but having paid a visit to Doctors' Commons, and discovering that report had not exaggerated her fortune, he speedily concerted his plans for obtaining an interview.

The next step of the fortune-hunter was to pay a visit to Mrs. Deleau's seat at Waddon, where, under a pretence of being desirous to inspect the house and gardens, he was politely admitted by the owner. It seems that he was disappointed in his object of obtaining an interview with the widow; however, at the moment he was quitting the premises, observing a lady at the window, whom he conceived to be Mrs. Deleau, he gave her full opportunity of admiring his handsome person, and retired firmly persuaded he had made the impression he wished. On another occasion, we find him attending a horse-race on Banstead Downs, with a view of being formally presented to the widow, but, from some accident, Mrs. Deleau was prevented from being present. He even went so far as to address a letter to her; but her servants, either aware of his character, or probably not having been softened by a bribe of sufficient magnitude, allowed it to pass no further than themselves.

It appears by the evidence produced on Fielding's trial, that, in the first stage of the proceedings, he applied to a Mrs. Streights for her assistance as a go-between. Mrs. Streights, on her part, referred him to a Mrs. Charlotte Villars, whose only acquaintance with Mrs. Deleau, was having been sent for by her, on one occasion, to cut her hair. This latter fact, however, Mrs. Villars, (who appears to have been a woman of the worst character,) carefully concealed from Fielding, and pretending that, from her intimacy with the widow, she was able materially to assist him in his views, obtained from him a promise of five hundred pounds, in the event of Mrs. Deleau becoming his wife.

Such was the commencement of a very ingenious plot, which was subsequently conducted with the most extraordinary success. Mrs. Villars having, in the first instance, procured the connivance of a young woman, named Mary Wadsworth, (whose morals appear to have been almost as indifferent as her own, but who, fortunately, somewhat resembled Mrs. Deleau in person,) she waited in due time on Fielding, and informed him that she had introduced the subject of his wishes to the widow. Mrs. Deleau, she said, had, in the first instance, refused to listen to her entreaties and arguments, but had latterly given them more favourable attention: to this she added her own conviction, that if the affair were managed with proper prudence, it would eventually terminate as he wished.

Part of Mrs. Villars' plot, (and it is extraordinary that she should have succeeded in so completely deluding and mystifying a man of the world,) was to obtain valuable presents from Fielding, which she persuaded him were duly delivered to Mrs. Deleau. She herself admits in her evidence at the trial,—"Diverse presents were sent from Mr. Fielding by me to the lady. The first present was a gold apron, stuck with green. That was the first present Mr. Fielding sent to Mrs. Wadsworth, whom he thought was Mrs. Deleau all the while; but it was Mrs. Wadsworth. I did not think Mrs. Deleau, who was a great fortune, would agree to marry a man of Mr. Fielding's character. Mr. Fielding kept sending of letters and presents from that time, from the latter end of Bartholomew-tide to my Lord Mayor's day: he sent her a suit of white satin knots, and gloves, and other things."

At length, having wearied the patience, and probably, very nearly exhausted the finances, of the adventurer, Mrs. Villars informed him, to his great satisfaction, that Mrs. Deleau had at last consented to an interview, and that, in a few days, she would conduct her to his lodgings in Pall Mall. "He desired," she says, in her evidence, "that I would bring her to his lodgings on Lord Mayor's day, at night, which I did about nine o'clock, in a mourning-coach. Mr. Fielding was not at home, but came immediately. When he came in, he fell down upon his knees, and kissed her, and expressed abundance of fond expressions. He asked her why she staid so long,— and whether she loved singing? He said he would send for Margaruita* to come up. When she came up, Mr. Fielding bid her sing the two songs he loved; which she did: the one was, 'Charming Creature,' — and the other, 'Ianthe

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* A well-known singer at the Opera. According to Mrs. Manley, the Earl of Nottingham purchased her favours for four thousand pounds, and afterwards bought her silence for a similar sum.—*New Atalantis*, vol. i. pp, 187, 188. Swift mentions her in a letter to Stella from Windsor, 1711:—"We have a music-meeting in our town to-night. I went to the rehearsal of it, and there was Margaruita and her sister, and another drab, and a parcel of fiddlers; I was weary, and would not go to the meeting, which I am sorry for, because I heard it was a great assembly."—*Journal to Stella*, 6th of August, 1711.

the lovely.' After which Mr. Fielding sent for two pints of wine, and some plum-cakes."

Mr. Montague, who had been retained as counsel for the prosecution, in his opening speech at the trial, thus describes the interview and subsequent proceedings :—" The prisoner was not within at the time they came there, but, being sent for, came in soon after, and was extremely complacent for some time ; but at length, though he had been cautioned not to let the lady know they were his lodgings, yet he could not forbear showing her his fine clothes, and what furniture he had ; and a little time after sent for Mrs. Margaruita to sing to her, and pretended he was so extremely taken with her, that nothing would satisfy him but being married that night. But she, with a seeming modesty, checked his forward behaviour, and made a show of going away in displeasure ; but, before they parted, he prevailed upon her to promise not to put off their marriage longer than Wednesday se'nnight. Mr. Fielding rightly judged by this conversation what an interest he had fixed in the lady, and looking upon himself to be sure of her, he actually went to a goldsmith and bespoke a ring,* and directed himself what posie should be engraved. When the day came, which had first been agreed on, sham pretences were made, not to seem over hasty in so serious a matter, and the marriage was put off till the Friday following; at which time, Mrs.

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* At Fielding's express desire, the motto "*tibi soli*" was engraved on the wedding ring.

Villars and the lady came again to Mr. Fielding's lodgings, where he received them with an extraordinary transport of joy, and the marriage must immediately be proceeded on. But she for some time feigned several put-offs, and at length made an offer to have gone away, but Mr. Fielding would by no means permit her to go, without making her his own, which he was resolved should be done presently; and, to make all things sure, he ran out and locked the chamber-door, to keep her and Mrs. Villars in, whilst he went for a priest." This important personage was obtained by Fielding at the embassy of the Emperor, and he was married to the supposed Mrs. Deleau the same night.

Mrs. Villars, in her evidence, affords some curious particulars respecting this extraordinary wedding. "The priest," she says, "called for water, salt, and rosemary, to make holy water. Boucher, (Fielding's man-servant,) brought up water and salt, but could get no rosemary. Mr. Fielding and I received it at the dining-room door. Then Mr. Fielding locked the door, and took the key on the inside. Mr. Fielding asked Mrs. Wadsworth, whether it should be done in the bed-chamber or dining-room? Mrs. Wadsworth agreed it should be in the bed-chamber. There were none present but Mr. Fielding, Mrs. Wadsworth, the priest, and myself. The priest made holy water, and blessed it. Then he set Mrs. Wadsworth at the right of Mr. Fielding. The priest stood before them, and read the ceremony in Latin, as I understood; and Mrs. Wadsworth said she was not yet satisfied he was a priest. Says Mr. Fielding to her,—"Do you think my dear, that I would have anybody to do this business, but the holy father?" Mrs. Wadsworth was well satisfied till he came to that part,—'Wilt thou have this woman to thy wedded wife?' She desired it might be spoke in English by him. He did so. He asked Mr. Fielding whether he would have this gentlewoman to his wedded wife. He said, 'Yes, with all my heart.' He asked the lady then, whether she would have this gentleman for her husband. She said 'Yes,' faintly. 'But, says Mr. Fielding, you must speak it so earnestly as I do: you must say with all my heart and soul.' Which she did. Then the priest blessed the ring, and gave it to Mr. Fielding to put on the lady's finger. He said something in Latin, but what it was, I know not. Then we went into the dining-room. Boucher brought up wine, and when all had drank, the priest was discharged."

Boucher, Fielding's servant, corroborates in every respect Mrs. Villars' statement. "My master," he says, "ordered me to be at home, and get clean sheets, wax-candles, and sconces; and fires in both the rooms. He told me some ladies would be there that night, and ordered, if he was not at home when they came, to tell them that he would be there presently. Accordingly they came, and he was not at home, but in a little time he came, and went up to them. Some time after that, he came down stairs, in great haste, and said,—'Boucher, go and bespeak a dish of pickles.' I did so, and brought over a cloth, and the rest of the things, and left them in the window. I staid by the stairs till he came back in a hackney-coach, with a priest along with him, in a long gown, and long beard, and a fur cap. I knew him to belong to the Emperor's Envoy, and I heard Mr. Fielding call him Reverend Father. Then I was ordered to set the table, and glasses, and wine and things of that kind, upon the side-board. I waited at table all the while. When supper was over, Mr. Fielding ordered me to go down, and fetch water, salt and rosemary. I went and got water and salt, but could get no rosemary. Then I was ordered to go down, and they were locked in, about three-quarters of an hour. He then called —'Boucher,' says he, 'will you fill some wine?' I did so, and perceived upon the thumb of this lady, upon her left hand, a plain gold ring which before supper she had not. When this was over, the priest went away. Presently after, says Mr. Fielding,—'Take the sheets from my bed, and lay them on the other bed for Mrs. Villars, and see that none lie there.' I told my master it was done. Mrs. Villars, in the meantime put the lady to bed. When I came down to tell them of it, I saw the lady's clothes on a stool in the chamber, and Mrs. Villars folding them up, and laying them in another room. I then lighted

Mrs. Villars to bed, and then went to bed myself. In the morning I was called to make a fire. I then perceived Mr. Fielding and this lady in bed together. The fire being made, I was ordered to get a hackney-coach. Mrs. Villars dressed the lady hastily, and she was carried away in the hackney-coach."

Under what circumstances Fielding was made aware of the impudent manner in which he had been duped, we have unfortunately not been made acquainted. As his marriage, however, with the Duchess of Cleveland took place within little more than a fortnight, the *dénouement* could not long have been delayed. The ladies, on their part, grew, as might have been expected, exorbitant in their demands for money, to which Fielding not only turned a deaf ear, but insisted on his presents being returned. Their repeated visits to Cleveland House must have caused him not a little annoyance. At last, apparently wearied out with their importunities, he sent for Mrs. Villars, and on her refusing to deny his marriage with Mrs. Wadsworth, not only gave her a severe beating, but told her, if she still persisted in declining to comply with his demands he would slit her nose, and "get two blacks, one of whom should hold her on his back, and the other break her bones." Mrs. Wadsworth was treated with scarcely more consideration. On her presenting herself at Cleveland House to claim him as her lawful husband, he beat her with a stick and made her nose bleed.

Fielding was found guilty at his trial and sentenced to be burnt in the hand, though he was afterwards pardoned by Queen Anne. On the 23rd of May, 1707, his marriage with the Duchess of Cleveland was annulled in the Arches Court, and from henceforth we discover no mention of either the fortune or the name of Robert Fielding.

BEAU WILSON.

Beau Wilson's mysterious rise from poverty to affluence.—Serves a campaign in Flanders.—Is broken for cowardice, and returns to England with forty shillings in his pocket.—His extraordinary show of wealth immediately after his return.—Various conjectures on the subject.—Extract from Madam Dunois' Memoirs.—Her belief that Wilson owed his good fortune to the favour of the Duchess of Cleveland.—Wilson engaged in a duel with Law, and killed.—Extract from Evelyn's Diary. —Law tried and condemned.—His escape from prison.—His death at Venice in 1729.

The preceding memoir of Beau Fielding throws so curious a light on the manners and customs of the last century, that we are tempted to introduce the portrait of another individual of the same stamp, who, though he figured a few years previously to his brother in dissipation, yet resembles him not a little in the ephemeral splendour of his existence, and the precarious sources from which his magnificence was derived.

The person known as Beau Wilson, whose mysterious rise from extreme poverty to the greatest affluence, afforded our ancestors so wide a field for curiosity and conjecture,—was a younger brother, for whom his friends had purchased a commission in the army. He served a campaign with the army in Flanders, but having been early broken for cowardice,—as some have asserted,—set out on his return to England with the small sum of forty shillings, which some charitable friend had lent him to pay the expenses of his passage.

This obscure, and apparently degraded, individual, had hardly made his appearance in the metropolis more than a few weeks, when, according to a contemporary, "he appeared the brightest star in the hemisphere; his coaches, saddle, hunting, race-horses, equipage, dress, and table, being the admiration of the world." Curiosity was eagerly at work to discover the secret source of this magnificence. It was questioned whether such extraordinary wealth could be derived from any of the fair sex, for there were few able to sustain him in such lavish expenditure. The manner in which he spent each day could always be accounted for, and, even when intoxicated, he was invariably on his guard against impertinent inquiries. Some believed that he had discovered the philosopher's stone; others affirmed that he had robbed a mail from Holland of a large quantity of rough diamonds; while another report was prevalent, that he was supported by the Jews, though the motive of their liberality does not appear.

Madame Dunois says in her Memoirs;—"He never played, or but inconsiderably; entertained with profuseness all who visited him; himself drank liberally; but in all hours, as well sober as otherwise, he kept a strict guard upon his words, though several were either employed, by the curiosity of others or their own, to take him at his looser moments, and persuade him to reveal his secret; but he so inviolably preserved it, that even their guesses were but at random, and without probability or foundation. He was not known to be an admirer of ladies, though he might doubtless have had the good fortune to have pleased, his person being no ways despicable. What adds to our surprise is, that he was at all times to be found, and ever with some of his people, seemingly open in conversation, free from spleen or chagrin; in a word, he had that settled air, as if he was assured his good fortune would for ever continue. One of his friends advised him to purchase an estate whilst he had money. Mr. Wilson thanked him, and said that he did not forget the future in the present: he was obliged to him for his counsel; but whilst he lived it would be ever thus, for he was always certain to be master of such a sum of money."

Such is the well-known history of Beau Wilson. Madame Dunois, however, informs us that he unquestionably owed his good fortune to the weakness of a certain great lady, by which insinuation the Duchess of Cleveland is evidently meant. The Duchess, it would seem, seeing him stretched on the grass in some public gardens, conceived a predilection for his handsome person, and took pains to ascertain his history and name. She afterwards received him in private, though their interviews, in order that he might remain ignorant to whom he owed his good fortune, invariably took place in the dark.

We learn from the same authority, that Wilson, instead of contenting himself with his unexpected good fortune, persisted in teazing the Duchess to acquaint him to whom he was obliged. This fact he is said to have eventually discovered, by hearing the voice of the Duchess as he passed her in Hyde Park, and subsequently perceiving a particular diamond ring on her finger. The Duchess was naturally exasperated at the discovery, and sent him word, that if he disclosed her secret to any human being, she would adopt the promptest measures to have him dispatched; while, on the other hand, if he consulted his own interests and security, he might depend upon receiving her bounty as before.

Whether Wilson was imprudent enough to neglect the hint does not appear. Madame Dunois, however, informs us, that Law, the celebrated financier, received a sum of money from the Duchess for putting him out of the way, and that he effectually fulfilled his engagement. That Wilson fell by the hands of Law there is no doubt. The former challenged him on some pretence about his sister, and in the encounter Wilson was killed. The duel took place at the close of 1694, and in the Gazette of the 3rd of January, 1695, a reward is offered for Law's apprehension. The proclamation describes him as a "black, lean man, six feet high, with large pock-marks in his face, big high nose, and speech broad and loud."

Evelyn, in his Diary, gives a somewhat fuller account of the cause of the duel. Wilson's singular career, and the mysterious means by which he supported his magnificence, were sufficient to excite the curiosity of even the sober-minded philosopher. "April 22, 1694:—A young man, named Wilson, the younger son of one who had not above two hundred pounds a year estate, lived in the garb and equipage of the richest nobleman, for house, furniture, coaches, saddle-horses, and kept a table and all things accordingly, redeemed his father's estate, and gave portions to his sisters, being challenged by one Law, a Scotchman, was killed in a duel, not fairly. The quarrel arose from his taking away his own sister from lodging in a house where this Law had a mistress; which the mistress of the house thinking a disparagement to it, and losing by it, instigated Law to this duel. He was taken and condemned for murder. The mystery is, how this so young a gentleman, very sober and of good fame, could live in such an expensive manner; it could not be discovered by all possible industry, or entreaty of his friends to make him reveal it. It did not appear that he was kept by women, play, coining, padding, or dealing in chemistry; but he would sometimes say, that, if he should live ever so long, he had wherewith to maintain himself in the same manner. This was a subject of much discourse."

With Wilson died his extraordinary secret. Law was apprehended, and subsequently tried and condemned; but having the good fortune to break out of prison, he escaped to the Low Countries, where his expensive manner of living so far exceeded his ostensible means of subsistence, as to afford grounds for curiosity and surmise. Law, it may be remarked, who mingled a life of pleasure with an application to more methodical pursuits, died at Venice in 1729, at the age of fifty-eight.

GEORGE THE FIRST.

CHAPTER I.

His birth. — His near relationship to the Stuarts. — Sketch of his mother. — Serves a campaign under his father, when in his fifteenth year. — Fights in the Imperial army against the Turks.—Accompanies King William during a series of campaigns. — Created by him a Knight of the Garter. — Is subsequently created by Queen Anne, Marquis and Duke of Cambridge, &c. with precedency of all the peers of Great Britain.—Visits England with a view to make overtures for the hand of the Princess Anne, afterwards Queen.—Recalled by his father, and forced to marry the daughter of the Duke of Zell.—Story of Sophia Dorothea, of Zell.—Her compulsory marriage with George the First in her sixteenth year.—Her beauty and intelligence.—Neglected and insulted by her husband. — Count Coningsmark's avowed admiration of her.—Indignation of her father-in-law.—Imprisoned in the Castle of Alden.—Divorced from her husband in 1694. —Her criminality doubtful. — Her son's affection for her.— Her dignified conduct during her imprisonment.—Her death in 1726.—George the First's accession to the English throne. —His indifference on the subject.—His arrival at Greenwich. —Anecdote.—His person and habits.—Extracts from Horace Walpole, and Archdeacon Coxe.—The King's male favourites.—Their rapacity.— The King's aversion to the English. —His profligate expenditure.

George Lewis, Elector of Hanover, who, agreeably with the provisions of the Act of Settlement, succeeded to the throne of these realms, as the head of the only Protestant branch of the House of Stuart, was born at Osnaburg, on the 28th of May, 1660. He was the eldest son of Ernest Augustus, Elector of Hanover, by Sophia the youngest daughter of Elizabeth, the amiable, and unfortunate Queen of Bohemia, only daughter of King James the First of England. King George was thus nearly related to the several members of the House of Stuart. He was great-grandson of King James I., nephew to King Charles I., first cousin to King Charles II. and James II., and first cousin, once removed, to Queen Mary, Queen Anne, and James Frederick Edward, commonly called the Pretender.

Of Ernest Augustus, the father of King George, we know little but that he was a brave and bustling man, who expired in 1698, before the intended aggrandizement of his family, as insured by the Act of Settlement, could have been known to him. His consort, however, the Electress Sophia, as well from her close relationship to the royal family of England as from her being one of the most extraordinary women of her time, claims to be particularly mentioned in a memoir of her son.

The Electress Sophia, the youngest of the twelve children of Frederick, the titular King of Bohemia, and his interesting consort, was born the 13th of October, 1630, and at the age of eighteen became the wife of Ernest Augustus, Elector of Hanover. Beautiful in her person, refined in her manners, and distinguished by the most captivating conversational powers, she mingled with these graceful accomplishments an almost masculine strength of mind, and an honourable respect for literature and science.* She is said to have made the laws and constitution of England her chief study, and by severe application, to have mastered the languages of Holland, Germany, Italy, France and England, which she spoke with so much ease and correctness, that she might have passed for a native of any one of these countries. Promoting, by every means in her power, the happiness of those about her; and always anxious, even in extreme old age, to originate scenes of social mirth and harmless diversion, she continued to unite with these endearing qualities a taste for graver studies and pursuits, and, besides extending her patronage to several eminent men of learning and science, was for many years the friend and correspondent of the celebrated philosopher Leibnitz. Distinguished for her sense of justice, and a regard for the sufferings of others, which was not exhibited by either of her contemporaries Queen Mary, or Queen Anne; she conceived a lively interest in the fortunes of the exiled branch of the Stuarts, and even endeavoured to persuade her relation, King William, to pass over her own claims, and to restore the unfortunate James to his hereditary rights.* The Electress retained, even to a very late period of life, not only her early freshness of feeling, but the beauty for which she had once been so distinguished. Toland, who was introduced to her at Hanover, when she was in her seventy-fourth year, describes her as reading without spectacles, and as still conspicuous for her graceful manners and commanding figure; without the trace of a wrinkle or apparently the loss of a tooth. Burnet also describes her, at the age of seventy-five, as still possessing infinite vivacity, and as " the most knowing and entertaining woman of her age." The Electress lived to her eighty-fourth year, when she expired on the 8th of June, 1714. The circumstances attending her dissolution, are somewhat remarkable. She was walking in the orangery, in the garden of Herenhausen, when, the rain suddenly descending, she hastened towards the electoral palace. An attendant reminding her that she had recently been indisposed, and that the exercise which she was taking was too violent, — " I believe you are right," she said, and almost at the same in-

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* The Electress would seem to have been stricter in the performance of her social than of her religious duties. "The Princess Sophia," says Dean Lockier, "was a woman of good sense, and excellent conversation. I was very well acquainted with her. She sat very loose in her religious principles, and used to take a particular pleasure in setting a heretic, whenever she could meet with such, and one of her chaplains a disputing together."—*Spence's Anecdotes*, p. 169.

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* Lord Dartmouth, who visited Hanover in the reign of William the Third, has bequeathed us the following interesting notice of the Electress Sophia: "She sent a coach to bring me to dinner to Herenhausen every day as long as I stayed. She was very free in her discourse, and said, she held a constant correspondence with King James, and his daughter, our Queen, with many particulars of a very extraordinary nature, that were great proofs of his being a very weak man, and her being a very good woman. She seemed piqued at the Princess Anne, and spoke of her with little kindness. She told me the King and Queen had both invited her to make them a visit into England: but she was grown old, and could not leave the Elector and her family; otherwise, should be glad to see her own country (as she was pleased to call it) before she died, and should willingly have her bones laid by her mother's in the Abbey, at Westminster, whom she always mentioned with great veneration. She took it unkindly, that the Duke of Zell should have the Garter before her husband, who, she thought, might have expected it upon her account; and told me, she was once like to have been married to King Charles the Second, which would not have been worse

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for the nation, considering how many children she had brought, to which I most sincerely agreed." *Burnet, Hist. of his Own Time*, vol. iv. p. 203, note.

The Electress was, in fact, a staunch Jacobite, and long maintained a secret correspondence with her cousin, King James, during the period he was an exile at St. Germains. A number of her letters, marked in King William's hand-writing, — " Letters of the Electress Sophia to the Court of St. Germains," was found in a chest belonging to that monarch, after his death. Under what circumstances they came into William's possession; whether by treachery, or whether they were transmitted to him by the Electress Sophia herself, as a proof of her change of sentiments, we have now, no means of ascertaining. In the second volume of Dalrymple's Memoirs will be found two interesting letters addressed by the Electress to King William, in which, while she thanks him for his endeavours to bring her family into the succession, she at the same time acknowledges a strong interest in the misfortunes of King James.

stant fell down and expired. The Electress died only fifty-three days before death closed the eyes of Queen Anne. Had she survived this period, this distinguished woman, would, agreeably with the provisions of the Act of Settlement, have ascended the throne of these realms. She used to say, that she should die happy could she only live to have "Here lies Sophia, Queen of England," engraved upon her coffin.

George Lewis, her only son, appears to have been afforded more favourable opportunities of acquiring an insight into human nature, and a knowledge of the world, than usually falls to the lot of sovereign princes. Inheriting the military taste of his father, he served under him, when only fifteen, during the successful campaign of 1675, and was present at the battle of Consarbruck, and the capture of Treves. He served also at different periods in Hungary, the Morea, Germany, and Flanders, and after the peace of Nimeguen, in 1679, visited France, England and other countries. He subsequently fought in the Imperial army against the Turks; was present at the signal defeat of the Infidels on the 12th of September, 1683; and distinguished himself by personal valour at the capture of Buda, in 1686. He accompanied King William during a series of campaigns, and was present at the battles of Steenkerke and Landen, and at the siege of Namur. On the 23rd of January, 1698, he succeeded his father as Duke of Hanover. King William created him a Knight of the Garter on the 18th of June, 1701; and on the 9th of November, 1706, Queen Anne created him Baron of Tewkesbury, Viscount of Northallerton, Earl of Milford-Haven, and Marquis and Duke of Cambridge, with precedency of all the peers of Great Britain.

Mention has already been made of a visit paid by the Electoral prince to England, after the peace of Nimeguen. It was his object, with the sanction of his father, to make overtures for the hand of the Princess Anne, afterwards Queen of England; and he had already proceeded to some lengths in the negotiation, when he was suddenly recalled by his father to Hanover. Circumstances had changed the views of the old Elector in regard to his son, and he now sought to unite the dukedoms of Hanover and Zell, by marrying his eldest son to the daughter and sole heiress of George William, Duke of Zell. Unfortunately for the parties concerned, he succeeded in his project; by which means, a young and very interesting woman, was made the victim of political expediency, and was compelled to give her hand to a man she could neither love nor esteem, and who, with the exception of his titles and wealth, could scarcely boast of a recommendation in his favour.

The story of Sophia Dorothea, the first cousin of George the First, and afterwards his repudiated wife, deserves a place in our pages. At the period of her marriage, which took place on the 11th of November, 1682, she had only attained her sixteenth year. She was at this period, eminently beautiful, and is said to have been no less distinguished for the qualities of her mind. Besides these advantages, she was the sole heiress of the house of Zell, and with half the princes of Germany at her feet, might at least have expected as much happiness as usually falls to the lot of the daughters of royalty. At the period of her marriage, which can only be regarded as a compulsory one, the Princess, in addition to the misfortune of becoming the wife of George the First, had unhappily formed a prior attachment for a young Prince of Wolfenbüttel, to whom she had plighted her faith.

This interesting and accomplished woman was neglected by her worthless husband within a few months after their marriage. He attached himself to undeserving mistresses, and even insulted his young wife by constantly introducing them into her presence. It was in the first years of her marriage, when her indignation was fully aroused by the insults to which she was daily exposed, that the young and handsome Count Coningsmark,—afterwards so celebrated for his share in the murder of Thomas Thynne,—made his appearance at the Electoral court. It seems that he had formerly professed a passion for the Electoral Princess when she was Princess of Zell; and now, according to Archdeacon Coxe, "at sight of her, his passion, which had been diminished by absence, broke out with increasing violence, and he had the imprudence publicly to renew his attentions."* Her husband happened, at this period, to be absent from Hanover, but his father, the old Elector, to whom the former attentions of Coningsmark were communicated by the enemies of the Princess, hastened to revenge the injury presumed to have been inflicted on the honour of his son. The manner in which the old Elector accomplished his purpose, is thus related by Horace Walpole:

"George the First," he says, "while Electoral Prince, had married his cousin, the Princess Sophia Dorothea, only child of the Duke of Zell—a match of convenience to reunite the dominions of the family. Though she was very handsome, the Prince, who was extremely amorous, had several mistresses; which provocation, and his absence in the army of the confederates, probably disposed the Princess to indulge in some degree of coquetry. At that moment arrived at Hanover the famous and beautiful Count Coningsmark, the charms of whose person ought not to have obliterated the memory of his vile assassination of Mr. Thynne. His vanity, the beauty of the Electoral Princess, and the neglect under which he found her, encouraged his presumption to make his addresses to her, not covertly, and she, though believed not to have transgressed her duty, did receive them too indiscreetly. The old Elector flamed at the insolence of so stigmatized a pretender, and ordered him to quit his dominions the next day. The Princess, surrounded by women too closely connected with her husband, and consequently enemies of the lady they injured, was persuaded by them to suffer the Count to kiss her hand before his abrupt departure, and he was actually introduced by them into her bedchamber next morning before she rose. From that moment he disappeared, nor was it known what became of him, till the death of George the First. On his son the new King's first journey to Hanover, some alterations in the palace being ordered by him, the body of Coningsmark was discovered under the floor of the Electoral Princess's dressing-room, the Count having, probably, been strangled there the instant he left her, and his body secreted. The discovery was hushed up. George the Second entrusted the secret to his wife, Queen Caroline, who told it to my father; but the King was too tender of the honour of his mother to utter it to his mistress, nor did Lady Suffolk ever hear of it till I informed her of it several years afterwards. The disappearance of the Count made his murder suspected, and various reports of the discovery of his body have, of late years, been spread, but not with the authentic circumstances." The spot on which Coningsmark was assassinated is said to be still pointed out in the Electoral palace at Hanover.

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* Life of Sir Robert Walpole, v. i, p. 267.

The arrest of Sophia followed immediately on the murder of her lover. She was sent a prisoner to the castle of Alden, situated on the small river Aller, in the Duchy of Zell, where, under the name of the Duchess of Halle, she spent a miserable captivity of thirty-two years, which was only terminated by her death. Horace Walpole considers that, notwithstanding their separation, she was never actually divorced from George the First. "The King," he says, "seems not to have wholly dissolved their union; for on the approach of the French army towards Hanover, during Queen Anne's reign, the Duchess of Halle was sent home to her father and mother, who doted on their only child, and retained her for a whole year, and implored, though in vain, that she might continue to reside with them. As her son, too, George the Second, had thoughts of bringing her over, and declaring her Queen-Dowager, one can hardly believe that a ceremonial divorce had passed, the existence of which process would have glared in the face of her royalty." Notwithstanding, however, Walpole's scepticism on the subject, the fact is now placed beyond a doubt that the King obtained a divorce from the Ecclesiastical consistory in Hanover, by an edict passed on the 28th of December, 1694, almost immediately after the assassination of Coningsmark.

Although George the First appears to have been convinced in his own mind of his wife's guilt, the fact of her criminality is not a little questionable. That a young and high-spirited woman like Sophia of Zell,—neglected as she was by her husband, insulted by the presence of his unworthy mistresses, and left an isolated being in a splendid circle,—may have been gratified at the evident devotion of a man like Coningsmark, and even, in an unguarded moment, may have shown satisfaction at his addresses, is not at all improbable. But, on the other hand, there is a want of reasonable evidence to establish her guilt, and, moreover, the conviction that she was innocent appears to have been general among the best-informed Hanoverians of the time. It was remarked, and with much reason, that had Coningsmark been really guilty, it was just as easy to punish him in a court of justice as to get rid of him by a foul assassination. George the Second, moreover, who loved his mother almost as much as he hated his father, was fully convinced of her innocence, and seized every opportunity of showing respect to his unhappy parent. Of his devotion to her more than one anecdote has been recorded. In contempt of his father's orders, who seems to have forbidden all intercourse between the mother and son, he, on one occasion, crossed the river Aller on horseback, opposite his mother's windows, and was only prevented from throwing himself at her feet by the determined opposition of the Baron de Bulow, to whose charge she was confided. On the day that George the Second ascended the throne, Lady Suffolk, for the first time, perceived the picture of a lady in his apartment, habited in the Electoral robes. This she afterwards discovered to be a portrait of his mother, which the Prince had secretly kept in his possession, during the life-time of his father, and now seized the earliest opportunity of drawing from its hiding-place.

"Those," says Archdeacon Coxe, "who exculpate Sophia, assert either that a common visit was construed into an act of criminality, or that the Countess of Platen, at a late hour, summoned Count Coningsmark in the name of the Princess, though without her connivance; that on being introduced, Sophia was surprised at his intrusion; that on quitting the apartment, he was discovered by Ernest Augustus, whom the Countess had placed in the gallery, and was instantly assassinated by persons whom she had suborned for that purpose." Whether there be any reasonable foundation for this strange story, it is now impossible to decide. The same anecdote, however, is related elsewhere; the only difference being that the Duchess of Kendal, and not the Countess of Platen, is asserted to have been the authoress of the plot.*

Sophia displayed a becoming dignity during her long and melancholy incarceration, and derived invaluable consolation from the exercise of her religious duties. It was her custom to receive the Sacrament once a week, on which occasions she never failed to make the most solemn protestations of her innocence. George the First, in the last years of his life, is said to have offered to restore his injured consort to her connubial rights. To this proposal she retorted with a noble indignation,—"If what I am accused of is true, I am unworthy of his bed, and if the accusation is false, he is unworthy of me: I will not accept his offers." According to Lady Suffolk, the circumstance which most sensibly affected the Princess in her misfortunes, was the dread that her own unfortunate position might reflect disgrace upon her children. We learn from the same authority, that when her husband renewed his overtures for a reconciliation, she positively refused to listen to them, unless he publicly solicited her pardon.

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* "Memoirs of Charles Seymour, late Duke of Somerset." It is needless to remark that both the Duchess of Kendal and the Countess of Platen were the acknowledged mistresses of George the First.

The foregoing anecdotes of the Electress Sophia are not characteristic either of the conduct or language of a guilty person. If she were innocent, which there exists but slender reason to doubt, how cruel and unmerited was the treatment which she experienced! Condemned to a long captivity of thirty-two years; deprived of the society of her children; and snatched from the pleasures of life at the very period when she was best qualified to enjoy them; the punishment, even had she been guilty, would have been far too oppressive for the offence. But, presuming that her innocence be admitted, how much more deeply must we compassionate the sufferings of this ill-fated woman. We must remember that her persecutor was her own husband; the man who, by right, should have been her protector; that he was in every respect her inferior in all qualities of mind and person; that he had first neglected, and afterwards tyrannized over his high-spirited wife; that by his insulting indifference, he had himself almost invited her to err; that he had incited his worthless concubines to become the spies over her actions; and in a word, that while daring to accuse and punish his victim for infidelity, he was himself the most notorious adulterer, and the most unscrupulous libertine in his dominions.

It was the misfortune of Sophia, that she died before her son, George the Second, ascended the throne of Great Britain. Had she survived the death of her husband only seven months, she would probably have seen her rights asserted and her character cleared. Her death took place on the 13th of November, 1726, in the sixty-first year of her age. In the London Gazette, which announces the event, she is simply styled the Duchess-dowager of Hanover.

We must now turn from the almost romantic history of a persecuted woman, to the far less interesting character of her phlegmatic husband. The circumstances which elevated George the First to the throne of England have been noticed elsewhere. It is sufficient to say that he was indebted for his aggrandizement merely to the accidental circumstance of his having been educated in the Protestant faith, there being, at the period of his accession, as many as *fifty-seven* individuals of the blood-royal who possessed superior hereditary claims.

Queen Anne expired on the 1st of August, 1714, and immediately afterwards King George was proclaimed with the usual ceremonies in the cities of London and Westminster, without a show of that opposition which had been anticipated from the adherents of the Stuarts. Craggs, the well-known secretary of state, had previously been despatched by the Tories to Hanover, with the tidings that the Queen was in an almost hopeless state. He presented himself at the Electoral palace of Herenhausen, on the 27th of August; but the same night there arrived two other expresses from England,—one for the King, and the other for the English Envoy-extraordinary, the Earl of Clarendon,—announcing the actual demise of the Queen. Two hours after midnight Lord Clarendon, a staunch Tory, was admitted to the King's apartment, and formally congratulated him on his accession to the throne of England. His reception of the English minister is said to have been cold and mortifying in the extreme; thus affording the earliest intimation of his preference for the Whigs—a preference which he had hitherto prudently concealed in his own breast.

It has been affirmed, that if any popular demonstration had taken place in England in favour of the exiled Stuarts, George the First would have contented himself with retaining the sovereignty of his beloved Electorate, and would, not unwillingly, have relinquished his claims to the throne of Great Britain. That this was the prevalent opinion among the best-informed circles of the period is undoubted; indeed Baron Polnitz, who was in Hanover at the time, affirms, notwithstanding all was peaceable in England, and that the Elector had no more reason to expect opposition than if his claims to the throne had been strictly hereditary, still that the love of Hanover, and of social ease, very nearly outweighed the temptation of becoming the possessor of a splendid crown. The circumstance which seems to have chiefly induced him to accept the proffered honour, was the satisfaction that he felt at having the Whigs on his side.

When one of his friends, alluding to the death of Charles the First on the scaffold, remarked that the anti-monarchical party in England was not yet extinct,—"I have nothing to fear," he said, "for the king-killers are all my friends." About the same period, after fairly admitting that he knew little of the constitution and customs of England,—"I intend," he said "to put myself entirely in the hands of my ministers, for they will be completely answerable for everything I do."

King George quitted the palace of Herenhausen on the 31st of August, 1714. He embarked at the Hague on the 16th of September, and arrived, two days afterwards, at Greenwich, where he was received, on his landing, by a large concourse of influential persons. During his progress from that town to London, he mentioned a rather curious anecdote to Lord Dorset, who was in the same coach with him. Thirty-three years before, he said, he had arrived in England as a suitor for the hand of Queen Anne, whom he now succeeded. On his return, he added, he was riding a common post-horse from London to Gravesend, from which latter place he intended to take shipping for Holland, when, the roads and the horse being equally indifferent, he met with a severe fall, and arrived at Gravesend covered with mud. While relating this circumstance, the King suddenly recognized the spot where the accident happened, and pointed it out to Lord Dorset. George the First made his public entry into the metropolis on the 20th of the month, and on the 20th of October was crowned at Westminster with the usual solemnities.

It must have required all the adventitious aid of sovereign dignity, and all the importance which is commonly attached to the name and office of a King, to have prevented the German Elector, not only from becoming extremely unpopular with his new subjects, but from figuring in a very ridiculous light in their estimation. A foreigner, as he was, in all his tastes and habits; ignorant, debauched, and illiterate; inelegant in his person, and ungraceful in his manners; he had never condescended to acquaint himself with the laws or customs of the English, and was, indeed, utterly unacquainted with their language. In addition to these drawbacks, though he was now in his fifty-fifth year, he had the folly and wickedness to encumber himself with a seraglio of hideous German prostitutes, who rendered him equally ludicrous by their absurdities, and unpopular by their rapacity.

Horace Walpole, after drawing a ridiculous picture of the King's German mistresses, observes,—"No wonder that the mob of London were highly diverted at the importation of so uncommon a seraglio. They were food for all the venom of the Jacobites; and, indeed, nothing could be grosser than the ribaldry that was vomited out in lampoons, libels, and every channel of abuse, against the sovereign and the new court. One of the German ladies being abused by the mob, was said to have put her head out of the coach, and cried in bad English, 'Good people, why you abuse us?—we come for all your goods.' —'Yes, damn ye,' answered a fellow in the crowd, 'and for all our chattels too.'" The two principal ladies of this repulsive seraglio, the Duchess of Kendal and the Countess of Darlington, are said to have been usually designated, in reference to a marked contrast in their personal appearance, as the "Maypole," and the "Elephant and Castle." In a letter in Mist's Journal, May 27, 1721, an anonymous writer observes,—"We are ruined by trulls; nay, what is more vexatious, by old ugly trulls, such as could not find entertainment in the most hospitable hundreds of Old Drury." It is remarkable that this passage was made the subject of Parliamentary debate. The House of Commons were very properly offended at the liberty taken with the sovereign, and the debate terminated by Mist, the printer of the Journal, being sentenced to imprisonment and fine.

The Court of George the First was, in fact, a foreign family, consisting of German mistresses and German favourites. "Coming from a poor Electorate," says Archdeacon Coxe, "they considered England as a kind of land of promise, and, at the same time, so precarious a possession that they endeavoured to enrich themselves with all possible speed." In regard to the female part of the establishment, the two principal ladies were not only honoured with peerages, and loaded with pensions, but, according to Etough, they notoriously disposed of state appointments through their brokers.* So grasping was their avarice, that, on the Duke of Somerset resigning the post of Master of the Horse, the King was prevailed upon, instead of nominating a successor, to confer the salary on the Duchess of Kendal, and to leave the place vacant. It may be remarked, that the profits, also, arising from the post of Master of the Buck-hounds, was conferred on another German.

The King's principal male favourites, were Baron Bothmar, Count Bernsdorf, and Robethon, of whom the two former are said to have aimed at a seat in the House of Lords, while the latter humbly contented himself with aspiring at a baronetcy. These individuals, not satisfied with enriching themselves at the expense of the English nation, chose to interfere in every political transaction, and not only jostled and thwarted the Prime Minister, Sir Robert Walpole, whenever an opportunity offered, but, on more than one occasion, treated him with insufferable insolence.

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* Letter to Dr. Birch, Add. MSS. Brit. Mus. 4326. B.

Among the persons who constituted the foreign Court of George the First, there were two individuals who must not be passed over in silence. These two were Turks, known by the names of Mustapha and Mahomet, who had been taken prisoners at the period when the King was serving in the Imperial army, and, for some reason, were admitted by him into his service. They had since served him with so much fidelity, that they were selected to accompany him from Hanover, on his accession to the English throne, and had since received the appointments of Pages of the Back-stairs. Apparently, the insignificance of these individuals renders any notice of them unnecessary; but even the King's Turkish menials were not without their share of influence under the new rule. Instead of confining themselves to the duties of their situations, and contenting themselves with their legitimate perquisites, they closely imitated the example set them by the rapacious Germans, and not only derived large sums by the sale of minor offices, but in a letter from Count Broglio to the King of France, they are mentioned as exercising considerable political influence over their royal master.

It is to one of these individuals that Pope alludes in his "Essay on Women."

> "From peer or bishop 'tis no easy thing,
> To draw the man who loves his God or King;
> Alas! I copy, or my draught would fail,
> From honest Mahomet or plain parson Hale."

Altogether, the rapacity of the German adventurers; the ridiculous airs which they gave themselves; and their unwarrantable interference in state affairs, excited the just indignation of the English. The King, on his part, so far from attempting to check the scandalous venality of his countrymen, appears to have encouraged them in their iniquitous robberies. On one occasion, a favourite cook having requested his permission to return to Hanover; and giving, as his reason for desiring his discharge, the profligate expenditure of all articles of food in the royal kitchen, so different from the frugal economy which he had been accustomed to see practised in the Hanoverian palaces;—"Never mind," said the King, "my present revenues will bear the expense: do you steal like the rest:" and he added, with a hearty laugh,—"be sure you take enough."

The King, indeed, appears to have utterly discredited the existence of such a virtue as honesty. Ridiculing the creditable scruples of the more conscientious of his servants, he seems to have been impressed with the conviction that venality was equally the foible of his first minister, and of the humblest denizen of his kitchen. When Sir Robert Walpole remonstrated with him on the rapaciousness of his German dependants, and their practice of disposing of places and honours at a high price, the King merely replied with a smile,—"I suppose *you* also are paid for your recommendations."

George the First appears to have been as averse to England and the English, as he was prejudiced in favour of Hanover and his own countrymen. Count Broglio writes to the King of France on the 6th of July, 1724,—"The King has no predilection for the English nation, and never receives in private any English of either sex; none even of his principal officers are admitted to his chamber of a morning to dress him, nor in the evening to undress him. These offices are performed by the Turks, who are his valets-de-chambre, and who give him everything he wants in private. He rather considers England as a temporary possession, *to be made the most of while it lasts*, than as a perpetual inheritance to himself and family. He will have no disputes with the Parliament, but commits the entire transaction of that business to Walpole; choosing rather that the responsibility should fall on his minister's head than on his own." The interests of this great country were almost entirely lost sight of in his attachment to his native dominions. Whenever he signed a treaty, or declared war, it was the aggrandizement of Hanover, and not of England, which dictated the policy of the moment; and the English had the mortification of seeing that the treasures which were lavished, and the blood which was spilt, were expended in gratifying the vanity of an ungrateful foreigner, and adding to the consequence of his paltry Electorate.

It has already been remarked, that George the First was entirely ignorant of the English language; and as his prime minister, Sir Robert Walpole, knew as little of the French, there remained no other means of communicating with each other except in Latin. "George the First," says Horace Walpole, "did not understand English: my father brushed up his old Latin, to use a phrase of Queen Elizabeth, in order to converse with the first Hanoverian sovereign, and ruled him in spite even of his mistresses." A biting sarcasm, uttered by William Shippen, the celebrated Tory leader in the reign of George the First, gave great offence to the Court; and as he refused to soften the expression, it led to his being sent to the Tower. "It was the only infelicity," he said, "of his Majesty's reign, that he was unacquainted with the English language and the English constitution."

As a proof of the justice of one of Count Broglio's remarks, — that the King merely regarded England as a temporary possession, "to be made the most of while it lasts,"—it may be observed that though George the First had carefully husbanded the revenues of the Electorate, in England he launched forth into the most profligate excesses. According to a contemporary writer, Toland, he had been accustomed, when in Hanover, to defray his household expenses every Saturday night. The case, however, was now altered; and the nation was equally amazed and exasperated, when, in 1725, the Parliament was called upon to defray the debts of the civil list, amounting to the enormous sum of £500,000.

CHAPTER II.

Attachment of the University of Oxford to the House of Stuart.—Whig principles of the University of Cambridge.—Dr. Trapp's epigram on the occasion.—Sir W. Browne's retort.—James Shepherd's attempt to assassinate the King.—His execution.—Lord Chesterfield's remark on the subject.—The King's good-humour, and love of music.—His aversion to pomp. — Anecdote of his humour. — Anecdotes of the Duchess of Bolton and of Dean Lockier. — The King's liberality of feeling towards the House of Stuart.—Extract from Horace Walpole. — The King's generosity towards prisoners for debt.—Horace Walpole presented to him, when a mere child.—His account of the presentation.—The King's *liaison* with Anne Brett, daughter of the repudiated Countess of Macclesfield, by her second husband.—Her insolence and ambition. — Anecdote of her related by Horace Walpole.—The King's superstitious feelings.—He orders his wife's will to be burned.—His hatred of her and his son, George the Second.—His departure from England in 1727 for his Electorate.—Archdeacon Coxe's details of his last illness.—Extract from the Marchmont Papers. — Romantic anecdote related by Lockhart.—The King's death in 1727.—His character as a man, and as a King.—His indifferent education. —Anecdote of him.—His daughter Sophia Dorothea married in 1706 to Frederick William, King of Prussia. — Her beauty and intelligence.—Her husband's brutal treatment of her. —Her death in 1757.

THE suppression of the unfortunate rebellion of 1715, though it imparted an accession of vigour to the existing government, added little to the personal popularity of the King. Only two years after that event, the sprig of oak was again boldly displayed on the 29th of May, and the white rose publicly worn on the birth-day of the Pretender. The university of Oxford, in particular, whose devotion to hereditary right, has, at times, almost assumed the character of romance, gave such evident proofs of their reviving attachment to the House of Stuart, that the government attempted to frighten them from their principles, by quartering on them a military force. On the other hand, the University of Cambridge forgot the individual failings of the Whig monarch in their attachment to Whig principles; and as a reward for their adhesion to the existing government, received a valuable present of books from the King. It was in reference to the very opposite conduct of the two Universities that Dr. Trapp composed the following epigram :—

> "Our royal master saw, with heedful eyes,
> The wants of his two Universities.
> Troops he to Oxford sent, as knowing why
> That learned body wanted loyalty;
> But books to Cambridge gave, as well discerning
> How that right loyal body wanted learning."

These lines were retorted upon with singular felicity by Sir William Browne, whose composition not only excels, both in point and versification, the verses which prompted his rejoinder, but has also the merit of having been written impromptu :—

> "The King to Oxford sent a troop of horse,
> For Tories know no argument but force.
> With equal care, to Cambridge books he sent,
> For Whigs allow no force but argument."

The circumstance, perhaps, is a curious one, that, notwithstanding the excited state of party-feeling in the reign of George the First, and the fact that by nearly half the nation he was regarded merely as a usurper, yet that his life should only on one occasion have been in danger from assassination, and then from the hands of a mere boy, who had conceived an almost frenzied devotion for the Stuart family. The youth in question was named James Shepherd, a coach-maker's apprentice, who, it seems, communicated his project to one Leake, a non-juring clergyman; at the same time expressing his desire to receive the sacrament daily, till he should have accomplished his purpose. By means of Leake, the government was made acquainted with the project, and the person of Shepherd secured. When placed on his trial, he not only freely admitted his guilt, but, at the place of execution, declared that he gloried in the design, and died a willing martyr to his principles. Lord Chesterfield writes, about thirty years afterwards, to his son,—"I cannot help reading of Porsenna and Regulus with surprise and reverence: and yet I remember that I saw, without either, the execution of Shepherd, a boy of eighteen years old, who intended to shoot the late King, and who would have been pardoned, if he would have expressed the least sorrow for his intended crime; but, on the contrary, he declared that if he was pardoned, he would attempt it again: that he thought it a duty which he owed his country; and that he died with pleasure for having endeavoured to perform it. Reason equals Shepherd with Regulus; but prejudice, and the recency of the fact, makes Shepherd a common malefactor, and Regulus a hero." Shepherd was executed at Tyburn on the 17th of March, 1718. Probably, though actuated by false principles, the youth may have sacrificed his life for what he believed the good of his country; and so far he merits the implied eulogium wasted upon him by Lord Chesterfield. He appears, however, by all accounts, to have been a mere fanatic, and more suited for Bedlam, than deserving a death on the scaffold, or a place in the temple of political martyrs.

Though occasionally obstinate and self-willed, George the First, when nothing of importance occurred to ruffle the evenness of his temper, appears to have been, what may be termed, an agreeable and a good-humoured man. In his own circle, and among his own friends, he could converse freely and laugh heartily, though, generally speaking, he preferred the pleasure of listening to the conversation of others to the labour of talking himself.* He delighted to divest himself of the cares of sovereignty with its trappings, and though neither his wit nor his conversation were of a very high order, he was, on these occasions, especially over his punch, a cheerful, and sometimes an amusing companion. Parade and observation were his particular aversion. Among his few redeeming qualities was a love of music, and whenever this taste led him to frequent the opera, instead of appearing in state in the royal box, he usually sat (in a box allotted to the ladies of the Court) behind the Duchess of Kendal and Lady Walsingham, where he could watch the performances without being observed by the audience.

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* Letter from Etough to Dr. Birch. Add. MSS. Brit. Mus. 4326, B.

Of the King's peculiar kind of humour, and of his practice of embellishing a slight incident, the following may be taken as a specimen : " This is a very odd country," he said, speaking of England, " the first morning, after my arrival at St. James', I looked out of the window, and saw a park with walls, and a canal, which they told me were mine. The next day, Lord Chetwynd, the ranger of *my* park, sent me a brace of fine carp out of *my* canal, and I was told I must give five guineas to Lord Chetwynd's man, for bringing me *my own* carp, out of *my own* canal in my own park."

A seasonable and well-turned pleasantry appears to have usually had the effect of putting him in a good-humour, a circumstance of which his courtiers did not fail to avail themselves. Among those who were in the habit of diverting him, either by exposing their own follies or retailing those of others, was the Duchess of Bolton, a natural daughter of the unfortunate Duke of Monmouth.* This lady is said to have frequently amused him by her ridiculous, and more than Hibernian, blunders. On one occasion, having been at the theatre the night before when Colley Cibber's first dramatic performance "Love's last Shift," was acted, the King inquired of her, the next day, what piece she had seen performed. The play, she said, with a grave face, was *La dernière Chemise de l'Amour*. At another time, she made her appearance at Court in a great fright, and the King inquiring the cause of her alarm, she told him she had just been listening to a prophecy of Whiston, that the world would be burnt in three years,—"And for my part," she added, "I am determined to go to China."

Among others, in whose society he delighted, was Dr. Lockier, the well-known friend of Pope and the wits. The King, one day seeing Lockier at Court, desired the Duchess of Ancaster to invite him to her evening party. Lockier, however, begged that the Duchess would excuse him to his Majesty: he stood well at present, he said, with the ministers, but should it be known that he was keeping such good company, he should probably miss the preferment which he was anxiously expecting. A few days afterwards Lockier was appointed to the Deanery of Peterborough, and while kneeling to kiss hands on his preferment, the King whispered good-naturedly in his ear, "Well, now, doctor, you will not be afraid to come to our evening parties, I hope."

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* Henrietta Crofts, natural daughter of James, Duke of Monmouth, by Eleanor, younger daughter of Sir Robert Needham, Knt. She became the third wife of Charles Paulet, second Duke of Bolton.

There were two other divines, (Dr. Younger, Dean of Salisbury, his deputy Clerk of the Closet, and a Dr. Savage,) in whose society the King appears to have taken great pleasure. He once inquired of the latter, how it happened that, during his long stay in the Papal dominions, he had missed effecting the conversion of the Pope? "I believe, your majesty," replied the other, "that it was because I had nothing higher than the see of Rome to offer his Holiness." Dr. Younger, whom he had formerly known in Hanover, he was accustomed to style his "little Dean." This person, with whom the King used familiarly to converse in high Dutch, while standing behind his chair, eventually obtained so inconvenient a degree of influence over his royal master, that the ministers, disliking his Tory principles, contrived effectually to remove him out of the way.

There is one trait in the character of George the First, for which we readily hasten to do him credit. We allude to the liberality of feeling which he displayed towards the adherents of the exiled family; and whether that feeling was prompted simply by constitutional good-nature, or whether it originated in some conscientious scruples in regard to the validity of his own claims, scruples which it is well known that he entertained, the circumstance, nevertheless, does him infinite credit. When it was reported to him of an old acquaintance, that on hearing the news of his accession, he had observed,—"I have no objection to smoke a pipe with him as Elector of Hanover, but I cannot admit his claims to the throne of Great Britain," the King is said, not only to have shown no resentment, but to have frequently regretted that a difference in political opinion should have separated him from a man whom he loved. It is said of him, on another occasion, that when at a masquerade, a lady, in a domino, invited him to fill a bumper, at the the same time proposing "the Pretender;" "I will drink," he said, "with all my heart to the health of any unfortunate prince."

But the following anecdote, related by Horace Walpole, not only places the generosity of the King's sentiments in a very agreeable point of view, but exhibits an instance of fine breeding, for which it would not be easy to find a parallel. "On one of his journeys to Hanover," says Walpole, "his coach broke down. At a distance, in view, was a chateau of a considerable German nobleman. The King sent to borrow assistance. The possessor came, conveyed the King to his house, and begged the honour of his majesty's accepting a dinner while his carriage was repairing; and, in the interim, asked leave to amuse his majesty with a collection of pictures, which he had formed in several tours to Italy. But what did the King see in one of the rooms, but an unknown portrait of a person in the robes and with the regalia of a sovereign of Great Britain! George asked whom it represented? The nobleman replied, with much diffident but decent respect, that in various journeys to Rome he had been acquainted with the Chevalier de St. George, who had done him the honour of sending him that picture. 'Upon my word,' said the King, instantly, 'it is very like to the family.'" It was impossible, adds Walpole, to remove the embarrassment of the proprietor with more good-breeding.

George the First was what may be termed a good-natured man, and though the frightful proscriptions which followed the suppression of the rebellion of 1715 must always be regarded as a blot on his character, they nevertheless appear to have been prompted by feelings of stern necessity, and by a conviction that it was incumbent upon him to make terrible examples, in order to prevent further outbreaks, rather than from an unrelenting vindictiveness, or that he derived any satisfaction from the misery of his fellow-creatures. That he could occasionally sympathise with the sufferings of others, there is no want of evidence to prove. From some cause, which has been left unexplained, he had conceived a particular interest in the condition of persons imprisoned for debt, and, on several occasions, we find him kindly procuring their release. Previously to his quitting Hanover, to assume the sovereignty of England, he ordered a general emancipation of all the insolvent debtors throughout the Electorate, and, only a few months afterwards, presented the sheriffs of London with a thousand pounds to be applied to a similar object. Again, in a progress which he made in the English provinces, in 1722, the King, at his own expense, released from gaol all prisoners confined for debt in every town through which he passed.

The account which Horace Walpole has left us of his being presented, when a mere child, to George the First, contains some of the most agreeable of his octogenarian reminiscences. "I must suppose," he says, "that the female attendants in the family must have put into my head *to long to see the King*. This childish caprice was so strong, that my mother solicited the Duchess of Kendal to obtain for me the honour of kissing his Majesty's hand before he set out for Hanover. A favour so unusual to be asked for a boy of ten years old, was still too slight to be refused to the wife of the first minister for her darling child; yet not being proper to be made a precedent, it was settled to be in private and at night. Accordingly, the night but one before the King began his last journey, my mother carried me, at ten at night, to the apartment of the Countess of Walsingham, on the ground-floor towards the garden at St. James's, which opened into that of her aunt, the Duchess of Kendal: apartments occupied by George the Second after his Queen's death, and by his successive mistresses, the Countesses of Suffolk and Yarmouth.

"Notice being given that the King was come down to supper, Lady Walsingham took me alone into the Duchess's ante-room, where we found alone the King and her. I knelt down and kissed his hand. He said a few words to me, and my conductress led me back to my mother.

"The person of the King is as perfect in my memory as if I saw him but yesterday. It was that of an elderly man, rather pale, and exactly like his pictures and coins; not tall, of an aspect rather good than august, with a dark tie-wig, a plain coat, waistcoat, and breeches of snuff-coloured cloth, with stockings of the same colour, and a blue riband over all. So entirely was he my object, that I do not believe I once looked at the Duchess; but as I could not avoid seeing her on entering the room, I remember that just beyond his Majesty stood a very tall, lean, ill-favoured old lady; but I did not retain the least idea of her features, nor know what the colour of her dress was." Walpole informs us elsewhere, that the King took him up in his arms, kissed him, and "chatted some time."

In the last years of his life, the King paid his English subjects the compliment of taking an Englishwoman for his mistress. This lady was Anne Brett, a daughter of the repudiated Countess of Macclesfield by her second husband, and a sister of Savage, the poet. Her hair and eyes are said to have been extremely dark, so much so, that she might have been mistaken for a Spanish beauty. She seems to have been as ambitious as she was handsome, and as she had been promised a coronet, as the reward of her complaisance, as soon as her royal lover returned from the last visit which he paid to Hanover, she would, probably, have proved a dangerous rival to the Duchess of Kendal, had the King's life been extended a few years. Insolence—a quality which she, probably, inherited from her unprincipled mother, Lady Macclesfield—appears to have been the chief characteristic of this new Sultana. Previously to the King's last departure for Hanover, he had left his new mistress in St. James's palace, in apartments contiguous to those of his granddaughters, the Princesses Anne, Amelia, and Elizabeth. "When the King set out," says Walpole, "Miss Brett ordered a door to be broken out of her apartment into the royal garden. Anne, the eldest of the Princesses, offended at that freedom, and not choosing such a companion in her walks, ordered the door to be walled up again. Miss Brett as imperiously reversed that command. The King died suddenly, and the empire of the new mistress, and her promised coronet, vanished. She afterwards married Sir William Leman, and was forgotten before her reign had transpired beyond the confines of Westminster."

George the First, at an earlier period of his life, had been warned by a French prophetess to take care of his wife, as it was fated that he would not survive her more than a twelvemonth. Like most Germans, he was superstitious, and such an effect had the prediction on his mind, that shortly after his wife's death, on taking leave of his son and the Princess of Wales, when on the eve of his departure for Hanover, he told them, with tears in his eyes, that he should never see them again. However, notwithstanding his firm conviction that the hour of his dissolution was at hand, the circumstance seems to have had no effect in deterring him from the commission of a very gross act of injustice and crime. With a contempt of all laws, human and divine, he gave directions that his wife's will should be burnt; and this for the mere purpose, it seems, of depriving his own son of some valuable legacies bequeathed to him by his unfortunate mother. It is a remarkable and a melancholy fact that his wife and his only son appear to have been the two persons whom George the First detested most in the world.

On the 3rd of June, 1727, the King departed from Greenwich on his last visit to his beloved electorate. He landed in Holland four days afterwards, and on reaching Delden, on the 9th of the month, appeared to be in the enjoyment of his usual health. It appears, however, that about twenty miles from that place he had supped with the Count de Twittel, at the country-seat of that nobleman, on which occasion he had eaten an unusual quantity of melons, an act of imprudence to which was subsequently ascribed the disorder that caused his death. He proceeded the same evening to Delden, and, having breakfasted the following morning on a cup of chocolate, set off on his way to Osnaburg.

The circumstances which attended the King's last illness are minutely detailed by Archdeacon Coxe, from the account of persons who were either eye-witnesses of, or who remembered, the event. "On his arrival at Bentham," says Coxe, "the King felt himself indisposed, but continued his journey, in opposition to the repeated entreaties of his suite. His indisposition increased, and when he arrived at Ippenburen, he was quite lethargic; his hand fell down as if lifeless, and his tongue hung out of his mouth. He gave, however, signs of life, by continually crying out, as well as he could articulate, 'Osnaburg, Osnaburg.' This impatience to reach Osnaburg induced the attendants not to stop at Ippenburen, but to hasten on in hopes of arriving at that city before he died. But it was too late. The exact time and place of his death cannot be ascertained; but it is most probable that he expired either as the carriage was ascending the hill near Ippenburen, or on the summit. On their arrival at the palace of his brother, the Bishop of Osnaburg, he was immediately bled, but all attempts to recover him proved ineffectual."*

Etough, in a letter to Dr. Birch, preserved in the British Museum, intimates that the extraordinary vigour of the King's constitution seemed to promise him an existence of more than common duration: he adds, however, that his fondness for sturgeon, and other strong food, and his custom of indulging in hearty suppers at late hours of the night, counteracted the exertions made by nature in his behalf.* These presumptions of the King's want of prudence, in regard to his daily diet, render it the more probable that the excess to which he indulged at the table of the Count de Twittel, was the immediate cause of his death.

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* Coxe's Life of Sir Robert Walpole, vol. i. p. 266.

Among the Marchmont Papers there is a letter, dated 15th June, 1727, addressed by George Baillie, Esq., to Alexander, Earl of Marchmont, detailing some further particulars relating to the death of George the First. The narrative, it may be remarked, differs in no material degree from that of Coxe. "It is with great grief and concern," says the writer, "that I am to tell you of our most excellent King's death. The melancholy news came by express yesterday. He had been ill at sea, and continued so on the road, but would not stop. On Friday night he was taken ill with a severe purging and great sweating, which weakened him very much. He would, however, go on; and upon Saturday lost his speech and the power of one side, but still made signs with his hand to proceed, and in the evening arrived at Osnaburg, where he died about one o'clock on Sunday morning; a fatal day, were we not happy in the Prince his successor."†

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* Add. MSS. Brit. Mus. 4326. B.

† Marchmont Papers, vol. ii. p. 411.

Lockhart, of Carnwath, in his Memoirs, relates a somewhat romantic anecdote, connected with the last illness of George the First, which was formerly current in Germany. According to this writer, the unfortunate Sophia Dorothea, shortly before her death, addressed a letter to her royal consort, in which, after emphatically asserting her innocence, she reproached him with the long course of ill-usage that she had experienced at his hands, and concluded by solemnly citing him to appear on a certain day before the Divine tribunal. This letter, it is said, was entrusted by the dying princess to a faithful attendant, by whom it was presented to the King on his entering his German dominions. He read it; appeared to be awe-struck by the contents, and immediately afterwards was seized by the disorder which carried him off. Lockhart, a trustworthy chronicler, informs us, that the same year in which the King died, he was actually shown the letter in question by Count Welling, Governor of Luxemburg. It is more likely, however, that Lockhart was imposed upon, than that the story had any foundation in fact. Indigestion, and not superstition, seems to have shortened the life of George the First.

King George expired on the 11th of June, 1727, in the sixty-eighth year of his age, and the thirteenth of his reign over England. His remains were interred at Hanover on the 3rd of September following. In person he was somewhat beneath the middle stature. His general appearance was undignified; his address awkward. Though not handsome, his features were good, and the slight expression which they bore is said to have been that of benignity. The King's character has already been sufficiently illustrated in the foregoing pages, without requiring any general summary of his virtues or his vices. It may be remarked, however, that, with the single exceptions of social pleasantry and constitutional good-humour, he seems to have been possessed of no redeeming quality which reflected dignity on him as a monarch, or rendered him amiable as a man. Profligate in his youth, and libidinous in old age, he figures through life as a bad husband, a bad father, and, in as far as England is concerned, a bad king. He wanted even those graceful qualifications of the Stuarts, a love for polite literature and the fine arts: he possessed no taste for the one, and extended no patronage to the other. The only thing he seems to have had a regard for was his own ease; the only being he hated heartily was probably his own son. Many of these unamiable characteristics were unquestionably owing to his indifferent education; for, notwithstanding his wrong-headiness, he is said to have meant well. A single favourable anecdote is related of this monarch, that when, on his accession to the throne, a German nobleman congratulated him on his elevation, "Rather," he said, "congratulate me on having Newton for a subject in one country, and Leibnitz in the other."* The authenticity of the story may reasonably be doubted, but, if true, it deserves to be written in letters of gold.

George the First, (by his wife, Sophia Dorothea of Zell,) was the father of two children,—a son and a daughter,—of whom the former succeeded him on the throne of England as King George the Second. His remaining child was Sophia Dorothea, born in 1684. This lady, on the 28th of November, 1706, became the wife of Frederick William, of Brandenburg, afterwards King of Prussia, a man whose eccentric brutalities have been rendered so celebrated by Voltaire. His unhappy wife is said to have combined the strong sense of her grandmother, the old Electress, with the beauty and fascinating manners of her unfortunate mother, Sophia of Zell. Neither her virtues, however, nor her accomplishments were sufficient to protect her against the inhumanities of her husband. This despicable and unmanly ruffian is known to have practised the same cruelties towards his wife and children which he exercised so notoriously towards his oppressed subjects. On different occasions, we find him kicking his daughter, with brutal violence, from his apartment;† proposing to behead his son, afterwards Frederick the Great, for having been guilty of writing a copy of verses; forcing that son to be a witness of the execution of his friend; and subsequently to be present at the public castigation of a beloved mistress. Harassed by her own misfortunes, and by witnessing the distresses of her children, the Queen of Prussia continued to drag on an existence of misery and disease till 1757, when she expired in the seventy-fourth year of her age.

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* This anecdote is related by Seward, but without giving his authority.—*Anecdotes of distinguished Persons*, vol. ii. p. 295.

† Lord Chesterfield writes to the plenipotentiaries on the 15th of September, 1750, from the Hague;—"My last letters from Rome inform me that the King of Prussia had beaten the

Princess-Royal, his daughter, most unmercifully, dragged her about the room by the hair, kicking her in the belly and breast, till her cries alarmed the officer of the guards, who came in. She keeps her bed of the bruises she received. Twenty-pence a day is allowed for the maintenance of the Prince-Royal in the Castle of Custan."—*Lord Mahon's Hist. of England*, vol. ii. p. 72, Appendix. The Princess, on the occasion above referred to, received a severe injury on her left breast, the marks of which she, some years afterwards, exhibited to Voltaire.

MELESINA,

DUCHESS OF KENDAL.

Sister of the Count of Schulenberg.—Appointed Maid of Honour to the Electress Sophia, mother of George the First. —The Duchess's birth in 1659.—Her personal appearance. —Reluctantly accompanies George the First to England.— Created an Irish peeress, Duchess of Munster, in 1716.— Afterwards created an English peeress, Duchess of Kendal, for life, and, subsequently, Princess of Eberstein in Germany. —Supposed to have contracted a left-handed marriage with George the First.—Her assumption of piety.—Sir R. Walpole's mean opinion of her.—Her political influence.— Letter respecting her from Count Broglio to Louis the Fifteenth.—The latter's reply.—The Duchess presides at the King's evening parties.—His nightly visits to her apartments. —Accompanies him on his last visit to Hanover.—Her grief on hearing of his death.—Singular anecdote.—The Duchess's death in 1743.

Erengard Melesina Schulenberg, the celebrated mistress of George the First, was sister of Frederic Achatius, Count of Schulenberg and Hedlen. The influence of her family procured her the appointment of Maid of Honour to the Electress Sophia, mother of George the First, at the period when her royal lover was only Electoral Prince. Thus early did their intercourse commence, and it is remarkable that the influence obtained by the one, and the affection felt by the other, should have survived till both were progressing towards their seventieth year. As Mademoiselle Schulenberg is said to have been a year older than her royal lover, the date of her birth must be placed in 1659.

It must have occasioned no slight degree of astonishment to the English people, and no small contempt for the taste of their new monarch, when, at the head of the extraordinary seraglio which accompanied him to England, they beheld a woman whose face was not only plain, and whose elongated figure was attenuated almost to emaciation, but who at this period must have entered on her fifty-fifth year.

This uninteresting Sultana, satisfied with the small pension which she enjoyed in Hanover, was with great difficulty prevailed upon to accompany her royal lover to England. According to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu,—" She even refused coming hither at first, fearing that the people of England, who, she thought, were accustomed to use their Kings barbarously, might chop off his head in the first fortnight ; and had not love or gratitude enough to venture being involved in his ruin." The King, however, who had been accustomed to saunter away his idle hours in the apartments of the women, and who dreaded the long evenings which he was likely to pass in England without female society, found arguments sufficiently forcible to effect a change in her resolution.

For this compliance with her lover's wishes

Mademoiselle Schulenberg was speedily and profusely rewarded. In 1716, the King created her a peeress of Ireland, with the titles of Baroness of Dundalk, Countess and Marchioness of Dungannon, and Duchess of Munster. She was afterwards raised, in 1719, to be a peeress of England with the additional titles of Baroness Glastonbury, Countess of Feversham, and Duchess of Kendal, *for life*, and was subsequently created Princess of Eberstein in Germany. It has been affirmed that George the First was married to the Duchess of Kendal with his left hand; and though an unauthorised ceremony of this nature must have appeared sufficiently ridiculous to the people of England, yet it was a kind of marriage which was not unfrequently practised in Germany, for the purpose of lulling inconvenient scruples, and creating for the lady an adventitious respect.* The Duchess herself, by assuming an extraordinary semblance of piety and attending strictly to her devotional duties, appears to have been eager to countenance such a belief. It is said to have been her custom to attend different Lutheran chapels as many as seven times on every Sunday. To her great mortification, however, the minister of the Lutheran chapel in the Savoy, notwithstanding her assumption of superior piety, positively refused to administer the sacrament to her, on the ground that she was living in a state of adultery, though she subsequently met with more complaisance from a clergyman of the same persuasion in the city.

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* There is reason to believe, from the contents of a letter from Etough to Dr. Birch preserved in the British Museum, that the ceremony was actually performed in this country by the Archbishop of York. Add. MSS. 4326. B.

Horace Walpole speaks of the Duchess of Kendal as "by no means an inviting object"; and, on another occasion, alluding to the impression which her appearance made on him in his youth, he describes her as "a very tall, lean, ill-favoured old lady." She was one day waiting behind the chair of the old Electress Sophia at a ball, when the latter, pointing her out to Mrs. Howard, afterwards Countess of Suffolk, observed,—"Look at that mawkin, and think of her being my son's mistress." Neither does her mind appear to have been more gifted than her person. She ever remained in ignorance of the English language, and Sir Robert Walpole, who was well acquainted with her, spoke of her capacity as contemptible in the extreme. A love of money, he said, was the ruling passion of her life; and it was one of his remarks, that were the King's honour put up to auction, she would have sold it, for the consideration of a shilling, to the highest bidder.

The correspondence which passed between Louis the Fifteenth, and his minister, Count Broglio, discovers how much importance was attached to the good word of the Duchess of Kendal, and how paramount was believed to be her influence over the King. Count Broglio writes to his royal master, on the 6th of July

1724,—"As the Duchess of Kendal seemed to express a desire to see me often, I have been very attentive to her; being convinced that it is highly essential to the advantage of your majesty's service to be on good terms with her, for she is closely united with the three ministers who now govern." And again, the Frenchman writes, on the 10th of the same month,—"The more I consider state affairs, the more I am convinced that the Government is entirely in the hands of Mr. Walpole, Lord Townshend, and the Duke of Newcastle, who are on the best terms with the Duchess of Kendal. The King visits her every afternoon from five till eight, and it is there that she endeavours to penetrate the sentiments of his Britannic majesty, for the purpose of consulting the three ministers, and pursuing the measures which may be thought necessary for accomplishing their designs. She sent me word that she was desirous of my friendship, and that I should place confidence in her. I assured her that I would do everything in my power to merit her esteem and friendship. I am convinced that she may be advantageously employed in promoting your majesty's service, and that it will be necessary to employ her, though I will not trust her further than is absolutely necessary."

It seems to be in reply to these curious passages, that the French King writes to Count Broglio on the 18th of July, following,—"There is no room to doubt that the Duchess of Kendal, having a great ascendancy over the King of Great Britain, and maintaining a strict union with his ministers, must materially influence their principal resolutions. You will neglect nothing to acquire a share of her confidence, from a conviction that nothing can be more conducive to my interests. There is, however, a manner of giving additional value to the marks of confidence you bestow on her in private, by avoiding in public all appearances which might seem too pointed; by which means you will avoid falling into the inconvenience of being suspected by those who are not friendly to the Duchess; at the same time that a kind of mysteriousness in public on the subject of your confidence, will give rise to a firm belief of your having formed a friendship mutually sincere."

Though George the First was far from being constant to his antiquated Sultana, she, nevertheless, maintained her unaccountable influence over him to the last. It must have been the force of habit, indeed, rather than the remains of any softer feeling, which latterly attached him to the mistress of his youth, for at the period when death dissolved their union, the connection between them must have subsisted for nearly half a century. Unquestionably, she was of great service to him after he had ascended the throne of England; for not only, from a long course of experience, was she intimately acquainted with his tastes, his prejudices, and habits, and thus able to dissipate the tedium of his more solitary hours, but she also did the honours of his evening parties, and, apparently, was complaisant enough to allow him to extend his favours to younger rivals, without wearying him with inconvenient reproaches. Occasionally, it is said, she used to complain of the great difficulty she experienced in amusing the King, and finding employment for his idle hours. A similar complaint is known to have been made by Madame de Maintenon during her intercourse with Louis the Fourteenth. George the First, when he paid his nightly visits to the apartments of the Duchess of Kendal, is said to have usually employed himself in cutting paper into different shapes.

Probably, the Duchess really retained an attachment for her royal lover. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu observes, speaking of their almost ludicrous amours, "She was duller than the King, and, consequently, did not find out that he was so." She accompanied her royal lover in his last visit to Hanover, but, for some reason, remained behind at Delden, while the King was hastening towards Osnaburg. She had, however, proceeded on her journey, when a courier met her on the road, and announced to her the melancholy tidings of the King's illness. She immediately hurried forward with all speed, but had accomplished only a few miles when a second courier communicated to her the tidings of his death. The grief which she displayed on hearing the news, to all appearance, was excessive and sincere. She even beat her breast and tore her hair, and immediately separating herself from the English ladies who accompanied her, took the road to Brunswick, where she remained in close seclusion about three months.

A somewhat fantastic anecdote is related by Horace Walpole, which, though it places in a ridiculous light the superstition both of George the First and of his mistress, yet affords pleasing evidence that they were sincerely attached to each other. "In a tender mood," says Walpole, "George the First promised the Duchess of Kendal, that if she survived him, and it were possible for the departed to return to this world, he would make her a visit. The Duchess, on his death, so much expected the accomplishment of that engagement, that a large raven, or some black fowl, flying into one of the windows of her villa at Isleworth, she was persuaded it was the soul of her departed monarch so accoutred, and received and treated it with all the respect and tenderness of duty, till the royal bird or she took their last flight."

The Duchess of Kendal, after the death of her royal lover, paid a compliment to England, by making it the country of her choice. She principally resided at Kendal House, near Twickenham, which, after her death, was converted into a tea-garden. She expired in the early part of 1743, in the eighty-fifth year of her age. Her wealth, of which Walpole, in a letter to Sir Horace Mann, speaks as "immense," was divided between her reputed niece and presumed daughter, the Countess of Chesterfield, and some other German relations.

SOPHIA CHARLOTTE,

COUNTESS OF PLATEN AND DARLINGTON.

Sister of Count Platen, one of the most influential noblemen in Hanover.—The family of Platen supply the Electoral House with mistresses.—The young Countess taken by her ambitious mother to the Electoral Court.—She thwarts her mother's schemes by falling in love with the son of a Hamburgh merchant.—She marries him, in order to preserve her character.—Her mother's disappointment and death.—The Countess separates from her husband, and squanders the fortune left her by her mother.—Becomes George the First's mistress.—His vexation at her indiscretions and extravagance.—She accompanies him to England.—Character of her by Lady M. W. Montagu.—Her *liaison* with Mr. Methuen.—Created Countess of Darlington.—Horace Walpole's portrait of her in her old age.—Her daughter by George the First married to Viscount Howe of Ireland.—Death of the Countess in 1730.

Sophia Charlotte, Countess of Platen, who figures as the next in importance in the seraglio of George the First, had attained the age of forty at the period when she followed the King to this country. She was of the house of Offlen, being sister of Count Platen, one of the most considerable men in Hanover. It seems to have been the fate of this family to supply the Electoral House with mistresses. The mother of Count Platen had long been the mistress of the Elector Ernest

Augustus, and, moreover, the Count had the misfortune to see his wife and sister successively filling the same situation to the Elector George Lewis, afterwards King of England.

The mother of the Countess of Platen is said to have carried her daughter to the Electoral court, with the express purpose of establishing her as the mistress of the future sovereign of England. The young lady was possessed of an agreeable person and considerable powers of fascination, and such was the effect which they produced on the amorous Elector, that his desertion of his consort, Sophia of Zell, and the subsequent divorce and misery of that unhappy woman, have been traced to this discreditable attachment. The young lady, however, discovered, at least at this period, but little inclination to second the ambitious views of her mother. Indeed, she completely thwarted them by falling in love with a M. Kilmansegge, the son of a merchant of Hamburgh, and by conferring on this person the favours which she had refused her sovereign, shortly afterwards proved in a fair way to become a mother. As the only means of saving her from irremediable disgrace, it was thought expedient to marry her to her seducer. Her mother died shortly after this event (as was supposed, of grief and disappointment), and bequeathed her daughter the large fortune of £40,000, which, in her youth, she had obtained from the generosity of her early lover, the Elector Ernest Augustus.

Impatient of matrimonial restraint, and addicted to pleasures little compatible with domestic happiness, the young Countess separated herself from her Hamburgh husband, and speedily squandered the handsome fortune of which she had become the possessor. At what period she became the mistress of George the First is not exactly known. The King, however, appears to have soon wearied of her charms; her indiscretions, moreover, and reckless extravagance, apparently, causing him great annoyance. On his accession to the English throne, she made a final, and, as it proved, successful attempt to regain the influence she had lost. Ascertaining that her rival, the Duchess of Kendal, had declined accompanying their royal master to his new dominions, she promptly offered her own services, which were gratefully and unhesitatingly accepted. Circumstances, however, still threatened to prevent the accomplishment of her ambitious designs. The King, though he accepted her services, discovered no intention to pay her debts; and as these were of large amount, and her creditors both watchful and importunate, she found it difficult to quit Hanover without their knowledge and consent. At length, she ingeniously effected her purpose by stealth. Having contrived to escape out of the town in disguise, she made the best of her way in a post-chaise to Holland, where she arrived in time to embark for England with the King.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, who was intimately acquainted with the Countess of Platen, describes her as being endowed with powers of fascination of no mean order. "She had a greater vivacity in conversation," says Lady Mary, "than ever I knew in a German of either sex. She loved reading, and had a taste for all polite learning. Her humour was easy and sociable. Her constitution inclined her to gallantry. She was well-bred and amusing in company. She knew both how to please and be pleased, and had experience enough to know it was hard to do either without money. Her unlimited expenses had left her with very little remaining, and she made what haste she could to make advantage of the opinion the English had of her power with the King, by receiving the presents that were made her from all quarters; and which she knew very well must cease, when it was known that the King's idleness carried him to her lodgings, without either regard for her advice, or affection for her person, which time and very bad paint had left without any of the charms which had once attracted him." Notwithstanding the loss of youth and beauty, Madame Kilmansegge, on finding herself established in this country, appears to have devoted herself to a life of pleasure, with the same zeal which she had pursued it when in Hanover. A Mr. Methuen,—a Lord of the Treasury, and one of the most distinguished lady-killers of the time,—is said to have been particularly honoured by her regard. This person, it is affirmed, had been incited to pay his addresses to her by Lord Halifax, who hoped, by this means, to obtain the private ear of the King.

The arrival of the Duchess of Kendal in England was an effectual check to the short-lived influence of the Countess of Platen. The King, however, was not ungrateful for the service which she had rendered him, and on the death of her husband in 1721, created her Countess of Leinster, in Ireland, and on the 10th of April, 1722, Baroness of Brentford, and Countess of Darlington, in England.

As she increased in years, Lady Darlington entirely lost the comeliness of her youth;—so much so, that Horace Walpole draws an almost disgusting portrait of the superannuated courtezan. "Lady Darlington," he says, "whom I saw at my mother's in my infancy, and whom I remember by being terrified by her enormous figure, was as corpulent and ample as the Duchess of Kendal was long and emaciated. Two fierce black eyes, large and rolling beneath two lofty arched eyebrows; two acres of cheeks spread with crimson; an ocean of neck that overflowed, and was not distinguished from the lower part of her body; and no part restrained by stays;—no wonder that a child dreaded such an ogress." Owing to her enormous bulk, Lady Darlington is said to have been commonly designated the "Elephant and Castle."

From the period of her elevation to the peerage, to her death in 1730, we discover no particulars respecting Lady Darlington. By George the First, she had one child, Charlotte, who became the wife of Viscount Howe, of Ireland, and the mother of the celebrated Admiral, Earl Howe.

PHILIP DORMER STANHOPE,

EARL OF CHESTERFIELD.

His birth.—His early thirst for distinction.—Lord Galway's advice to him.—His opinion of the University of Cambridge.—His habits of life there.—His own account of his pedantry.—Makes the tour of Europe.—Elected Member for St. Germains, and appointed Gentleman of the Bedchamber to the Prince.—Appointed Captain of the Yeomen of the Guard in 1723.—Succeeds to the Earldom.—Sent Ambassador to Holland.—His splendid style of living.—Extracts from the Suffolk Correspondence.—Created a Knight of the Garter.—Takes an active part in the debates of the House of Lords.—Opposes the Excise Bill, and is dismissed from all his offices.—Marries the Duchess of Kendal's reputed niece.—Appointed Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland.—His successful administration there.—Appointed principal Secretary of State.—Resigns his Secretaryship.—Horace Walpole's high opinion of his eloquence.—His wit and conversational powers.—Pope's compliment to the Earl's wit.—The Earl's epigram on Sir Thomas Robinson.—His literary associates.—His patronage of literary men.—Specimen of his versification.—His attachment to his natural son.—Addresses his celebrated letters to him.—Character of the letters.—Sarcastic epigram on them.—Character of the Earl's natural son.—His death in 1768.—Publication of the letters in 1774.—The Earl in his old age.—Characteristic anecdote of his last moments.—His death in 1773.

This nobleman, so celebrated for his conversational wit, and for the profligate homilies which he preached to his own son, was the first-born of Philip, third Earl of Chesterfield, by Lady Elizabeth Saville, daughter and coheiress of George, Marquis of Halifax. He was born in London on the 22nd of September, 1694, and having passed through a course of instruction under private tutors, was entered, at the age of eighteen, a student of Trinity Hall, Cambridge.

A thirst for distinction, and an eager desire to elevate himself above the mere man of rank, appear to have influenced the conduct of Lord Chesterfield at a very early age. Many years afterwards he writes to his son, then in his twelfth year,—“ When I was at your age, I should have been ashamed if any boy of the same age had learned his book better, or played at any play better than I did; and I should not have rested a moment till I had got before him.” The following piece of advice, which Lord Galway gave him in his youth, is said to have made a particular impression on his mind. “ If you intend to be a man of business, you must be an early riser: in the distinguished posts your parts, rank, and fortune will entitle you to fill, you will be liable to have visitors at every hour of the day, and unless you will rise constantly at an early hour, you will never have any leisure to yourself.” This sensible admonition produced the desired effect, and even when, as sometimes happened, he had exhausted the greater part of the previous night in the pursuit of pleasure, he persisted, the next morning, in rising at his usual early hour. Several years afterwards, when Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, an acquaintance inquiring of him how he could possibly contrive to get through so much business,—"Because," he said, "I never put off till to-morrow what I can possibly do to-day."

Of the manner in which Lord Chesterfield passed his time at the University we have only some statements contained in his correspondence, and these are not a little contradictory. In a letter, written a few months after his matriculation, he writes,—"I find the college, where I am, infinitely the best in the University; for it is the smallest, and it is filled with lawyers who have lived in the world, and know how to behave. Whatever may be said to the contrary, there is certainly very little debauchery in this University, especially amongst people of fashion, for a man must have the inclinations of a porter to endure it here."

Notwithstanding, however, this laudable abhorrence of vulgar debauchery, it appears that the subsequent arbiter of taste and fashion grew to be himself tainted by its plebeian fascinations. Many years afterwards, he writes to his beloved son,—"As I make no difficulty of confessing my past errors, where I think the confession may be of use to you, I will own that when I first went to the University I drank and smoked, notwithstanding the aversion I had to wine and tobacco, only because I thought it genteel, and that it made me look like a man. When I went abroad, I first went to the Hague, where gaming was much in fashion, and where I observed that many people of shining rank and character gamed too. I was then young enough and silly enough to believe that gaming was one of their accomplishments; and, as I aimed at perfection, I adopted gaming as a necessary step to it. Thus I acquired by error the habit of a vice, which, far from adorning my character, has, I am conscious, been a great blemish to it."

Nevertheless, the thirst for knowledge, and the desire of distinction, were not altogether without their legitimate influence, and served at times to wean him from his pernicious pursuits. In a letter written in his youth, he says, that with the exception of an occasional game at tennis, his time is almost entirely occupied with the study of philosophy and the civil law, and with his attendance on mathematical lectures. "As for anatomy," he adds, "I shall not have an opportunity of learning it; for though a poor man has been hanged, the surgeon, who used to perform those operations, would not this year give any lectures, because it was a man, and then he says the scholars will not come." When he left Cambridge, at the age of nineteen, he had become, to use his own words, an "absolute pedant." — "When I talked my best," he says, "I talked Horace; when I aimed at being facetious, I quoted Martial; and when I had a mind to be a fine gentleman, I talked Ovid. I was convinced that none but the ancients had common sense; that the classics contained everything that was either necessary, or useful, or ornamental to men: and I was not without thoughts of wearing the *toga virilis* of the Romans, instead of the vulgar and illiberal dress of the moderns."

On quitting the University, Lord Chesterfield made the then fashionable tour of Europe, without the customary incumbrance of a travelling tutor. A considerable portion of his time appears to have been wasted in gaming at the Hague, and a further period in playing the *petit mâitre* at Paris. "I shall not give you my opinion of the French," he writes, "because I am very often taken for one; and many a Frenchman has paid me the highest compliment they think they can pay to any one, which is, 'Sir, you are just like one of us.' I talk a great deal; I am very loud and peremptory; I sing and dance as I go along; and, lastly, I spend a monstrous deal of money in powder, feathers, white gloves, &c." He returned to England before he had completed his twenty-first year, and while yet under age, was elected member for St. Germains, in Cornwall. About the same period he was appointed gentleman of the bed-chamber to the Prince of Wales, afterwards George the Second. He sided with the Prince during his memorable quarrels with his father, and from this circumstance, as well as by the pertinacious manner in which he opposed the court in Parliament, rendered himself personally offensive to the King.

In 1723, having recently made his peace with the Court, by voting in favour of an augmentation of the army, he was rewarded with the post of Captain of the Yeomen of the Guards. It is said to have been in his power to render his place extremely profitable, by disposing of the subordinate situations in his gift. When Lord Lumley, his predecessor in the office, (who, it seems, had laudably neglected to avail himself of this advantage,) advised him to be less scrupulous,—"I had rather, in this instance," he said, "follow your lordship's example than your advice."

By the death of his father, on the 27th of January 1726, he succeeded as fourth Earl of Chesterfield, and on the accession of George the Second to the throne, in 1727, was rewarded for his attachment to the new Sovereign by being appointed a lord of the bedchamber, and a member of the Privy Council. In the spring of 1728, he was sent ambassador to Holland, where he no less distinguished himself by his talent for diplomacy, than by his magnificent mode of living. The anniversary of the King's birth-day, afforded him an excellent opportunity of displaying his splendour to the homely Dutch. Accordingly, when the day arrived, we find him entertaining the foreign ministers and the whole of the States-General, at three different tables in a room purposely built by him for the occasion. To Mrs. Howard he writes on the 13th of August, 1728; —"I am at present over head and ears in mortar, building a room of fifty feet long, and thirty-four broad. Whether these are the right proportions or no, I must submit to you and Lord Herbert, who, I hope, will be so good as to give me your sentiments upon it. It will, I am sure, have five great faults, which are five great windows, each of them big enough to admit intolerable light. However, such as it is, it will be handselled upon his Majesty's birth-day next; at which time, if you will do me the honour to come there, and bring your own company, you will be extremely welcome."* The day following the entertainment, he gave a ball to four hundred persons, while, in the vicinity of the embassy, two fountains were constructed,—beautifully illuminated, and flowing with wine,—at which the populace were allowed to drink to the sound of music, till three o'clock in the morning.

Of Lord Chesterfield's mode of passing his time at the Hague, we find some amusing notices in his letters to Mrs. Howard. He writes to that lady, 18th May, 1728:—"My morning is entirely taken up in doing the King's business very ill, and my own still worse: this lasts till I sit down to dinner with fourteen or fifteen people, where the conversation is cheerful enough, being animated by the patronazza, and other loyal healths. The evening, which begins at five o'clock, is wholly sacred to pleasures; as, for instance, the Forault† till six; then either a very bad French play, or a reprize at quadrille with three ladies, the youngest upwards of fifty, at which, with a very ill-run, one may lose, besides one's time, three florins: this lasts till ten o'clock, at which time I come home, reflecting with satisfaction on the innocent amusements of a well-spent day, that leave no sting behind them, and go to bed at eleven, with the testimony of a good conscience." Again, Lord Chesterfield writes to Mrs. Howard from the Hague, on the 13th of July following; "This place, though empty in comparison of what it is in the winter, is yet not without its recreations. I played at blind-man's buff till past three this morning; we have music in 'The Wood'; parties out of town; besides the constant amusements of quadrille and scandal, which flourish and abound. We have even attempted two or three balls, but with very moderate success, the ladies here being a little apt to quarrel with one another; insomuch that before you can dance down three couple, it is highly probable that two of them are sat down in a huff. Upon these occasions I show the circumspection of a minister, and observe a strict neutrality, by which means I have hitherto escaped being engaged in a war."*

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* Suffolk Correspondence, vol. i. p. 306.

† The Voorhout, a public walk at the Hague, planted by Charles the Fifth. Lady M. W. Montagu thus describes it in a letter to Miss Skirrett, dated the Hague, 5th of August, 1716,—"The Voorhout is, at the same time, the Hyde Park and

"Lord Chesterfield's first public character," says Horace Walpole, "was that of Ambassador

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Mall of the people of quality; for they take the air in it both on foot and in coaches: there are shops for wafers, cool liquors, &c." Letters, vol. i. p. 264.

* Suffolk Correspondence, pp. 289—302.

to Holland, where he courted the good opinion of that economical people, by losing immense sums at play." But it was not in Holland alone that he indulged in this pernicious vice; from his youth it had been a blot on his character, and on his return to London, he persisted in renewing his almost nightly visits to White's and other places. On one occasion, in the rooms at Bath, a young nobleman happening to stand near him, whose fortune had hitherto escaped the harpies of the gaming-table,—"Beware of these scoundrels," whispered Lord Chesterfield; "it is by flight alone that you can preserve your purse." The young nobleman took his advice and quitted the room, but returning a short time afterwards, beheld his monitor engaged at play with those same "scoundrels," whom he had himself warned him so strenuously to shun.

Lord Chesterfield's unfortunate propensity for the gaming-table is not only bitterly lamented by him in several of his letters, but, on more than one occasion, seems to have materially interfered with his brilliant prospects in life. It is said to have been on account of this unhappy failing that, when he became a suitor for the hand of Mademoiselle Schulemberg, the presumed daughter of George the First, that monarch positively refused his consent to the match, and, indeed, withheld his permission to the day of his death. Again, the indulgence of the same propensity is said, in the reign of George the Second, to have indirectly occasioned his loss of influence at

Court. "The Queen," says Walpole, "had an obscure window at St. James's that looked into a dark passage, lighted only by a single lamp at night, which looked upon Mrs. Howard's apartment. Lord Chesterfield, one twelfth-night at court, had won so large a sum of money, that he thought it imprudent to carry it home in the dark, and deposited it with the mistress. Thence the Queen inferred great intimacy; and thenceforwards Lord Chesterfield could obtain no favour from court; and, finding himself desperate, went into opposition." The sum won by Lord Chesterfield on this particular night is said to have been fifteen thousand pounds.

In October 1729, Lord Chesterfield returned to England from the Hague. He immediately waited on the prime minister, Sir Robert Walpole, who seems to have been somewhat jealous of his influence with the King, and who could not refrain from displaying it at their interview. "Well, my Lord," he observed, "I find you are come to be Secretary of State." Lord Chesterfield told him he had no such pretensions; but, he added,—"I claim the Garter, not on account of my late services, but agreeably with the King's promise to me when he was Prince of Wales: besides I am a man of pleasure, and the blue riband would add two inches to my size." The King kept his word, and on the 18th of June following, Lord Chesterfield was installed a Knight of the Garter, at Windsor, at the same time as the young Duke of Cumberland; George the

Second being present at the ceremony, and defraying the expense of the installation. About the same period, the appointment was conferred on him of High Steward of the household.

In August following, he repaired to his duties at the Hague; but returned in 1732, on the ground of impaired health, and commenced taking an active part in the debates of the House of Lords. From this period, in consequence of the freedom of speech in which he indulged in Parliament, his favour at Court was of short duration. By degrees, he seceded from Sir Robert Walpole and his party; and subsequently, in consequence of opposing the progress of the Excise Bill in the Upper House, was dismissed in 1732 from all his offices by the King.

On the 5th of September, 1733, about six years after the death of George the First, Lord Chesterfield received the hand of Melesina de Schulenberg; a lady who was acknowledged in society as the niece of the Duchess of Kendal, but who, there is every reason to believe, was the daughter of that lady by her royal lover. Lady Chesterfield, on the 10th of April, 1722, had been created by George the First Baroness of Aldborough and Countess of Walsingham. On her marriage, however, she assumed the title of her husband.

For several years after his dismissal from office, Lord Chesterfield continued in constant opposition to the Court. However, in 1744, he was re-appointed to his former post of Ambassador at the Hague; and, subsequently, on the 3rd of

January, 1745, was constituted Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. It was his fortune to fill this high office during the celebrated rebellion which took place in that year. By his vigilant conduct, his sensible precautions, and the personal popularity which he had obtained by showing himself a friend of toleration and the enemy of persecution, he maintained the whole of Ireland in perfect tranquillity, and obtained the applause of all parties but those whose intrigues he circumvented. Even Walpole admits that he was the most popular governor Ireland ever had.

An anecdote is related of Lord Chesterfield by his friend and correspondent Dr. Chevenix, Bishop of Waterford, which admirably illustrates his wit and presence of mind during the heat of the Rebellion: "The vice-treasurer, Mr. Gardner, a man of a good character and a considerable fortune, waited upon him one morning, and in a great fright told him that he was assured upon good authority that the people in the Province of Connaught were actually rising. Upon which Lord Chesterfield took out his watch, and with great composure answered him,—"It is nine o'clock, and certainly time for them to rise; I therefore believe your news to be true." The same story is related, though with some trifling difference, by Horace Walpole.

Another anecdote is recorded of Lord Chesterfield at this period, that when a fussy Protestant gentleman came to complain to him that he had suddenly discovered his coachman to be a Roman

Catholic, and that he secretly attended mass;—"Does he, indeed?" said Lord Chesterfield with a suppressed smile;—"well, I will take care that he shall never carry me there." It has been affirmed, as a proof of Lord Chesterfield's extraordinary influence in Ireland, and the excellence of his administration, that during the whole period he was in that country, no single instance occurred of a person being seen drunk in the street. This story, however, seems rather too wonderful to admit of implicit credit.

In April, 1746, Lord Chesterfield resigned the Lord-Lieutenancy of Ireland, and in November following, was appointed principal Secretary of State. During the time that he had filled the former situation, no faro-table, or high gaming of any kind, had been permitted at the vice-regal palace. Now, also, that he was appointed to the high post of Secretary of State, his sense of propriety so far prevailed over the ruling passion of his life, that he neither gambled himself, nor allowed play in his house. Even his panegyrist, Dr. Maty, however, admits that on the very evening on which he quitted office, he paid a visit to White's, and renewed those pernicious practices which had been interrupted for about four years. "From this period," says Walpole, "he lived at White's; gaming and pronouncing witticisms among the boys of quality."

Lord Orford, who misses no opportunity of placing the character and conduct of Lord Chesterfield in a ridiculous or contemptible light, relates the following anecdote at his expense:—"On his being made Secretary of State, he found a fair young lad in the ante-chamber at St. James's, who seeming much at home, the Earl, concluding it was the mistress's (Lady Yarmouth's) son, was profuse of attentions to the boy, and more prodigal still of his prodigious regard for his mamma. The shrewd boy received all his lordship's vows with indulgence, and without betraying himself. At last he said,—'I suppose your Lordship takes me for Master Louis; but I am only Sir William Russell, one of the pages.'"

In 1748, partly from some differences which he had with his colleagues, and partly on account of ill-health, Lord Chesterfield resigned his appointment of Secretary of State; nor did he henceforward accept any office under the State. Occasionally, indeed, he spoke in his seat in the House of Lords, and more particularly distinguished himself in 1751, when the proposal to alter our style, according to the Gregorian account, was discussed in Parliament. He was seconded by an able mathematician and astronomer, Lord Macclesfield; and it is remarkable, that while the latter nobleman, (though fully conversant with all the merits of this complicated question,) failed, from some natural defects, in either entertaining or enlightening his hearers, Lord Chesterfield, who possessed only a very superficial knowledge of the question, produced, by his graceful eloquence and the perspicuity of his style, one of the most amusing and effective speeches on record. He himself observes, alluding to the success of his oratory on this occasion,—"God knows, I had not even attempted it. I could just as soon have talked Celtic or Sclavonian to them, as astronomy, and they would have understood me full as well."* Lord Chesterfield's eloquence was unquestionably of a high order. Horace Walpole,—who had listened to the oratory of his own father; of Wyndham, Carteret, Pulteney, and Pitt, — observes, that the "finest speech" he had ever heard was one of Lord Chesterfield's.†

Dr. Johnson remarked of Lord Chesterfield, that he was "a wit among Lords, and a Lord among wits." Horace Walpole also observes of his conversational powers, — "Chesterfield's entrance into the world was announced by his *bon mots*; and his closing lips dropped repartees that sparkled with his juvenile fire." Nothing can be more strongly expressed than this latter encomium, and consequently in a work written at a later period of Walpole's life, we are not a little startled by discovering the following contradictory remarks: — "Lord Chesterfield had early in his life announced his claim to wit, and the women believed in it. He had, besides, given himself out for a man of great intrigue with as slender pretensions; yet the women believed in that too: one should have thought they had been more competent judges of merit in that particular. It was not his fault if he had not wit: nothing exceeded his efforts in that point; and though they were far from producing the wit, they at least amply yielded the applause he aimed at. He was so accustomed to see people laugh at the most trifling things he said, that he would be disappointed at finding nobody smile before they knew what he was going to say. His speeches were fine, but as much laboured as his extempore sayings. His writings were everybody's, that is, whatever came out good was given to him, and he was too humble ever to refuse the gift."*

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* Letter to his Son, No. 247.

† Walpole's Letters, vol. i. p. 321.

That there exists some truth in the foregoing picture, is not at all improbable; but on the other hand it would be unfair to rob Lord Chesterfield of his reputation for wit, merely because so prejudiced a writer as Horace Walpole chooses to deny him in one passage, what he had freely and almost enthusiastically awarded him in another. Of little worth, indeed, was the praise or blame of Horace Walpole! With the cynical voluptuary of Strawberry Hill, a presumed personal slight, or the mere circumstance of a difference in politics, was sufficient to convert admiration into contempt, and friendship into hatred, and to send down to posterity in the likeness of a demon, the man who might otherwise have been invested with the attributes of an angel. The secret of his enmity to Lord Chesterfield is evident. The latter had deserted the colours of Sir Robert Walpole, to join the ranks of the Tories, and, what was still more unpardonable, had conceived an intimate friendship for the arch-enemy of the Walpoles, Lord Bolingbroke. From henceforth, to the rancorous mind of Lord Orford, Lord Chesterfield ceased to be either the brilliant orator or the sparkling wit.

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* Walpole's Memoirs of the last ten years of George II. vol. i, p. 44.

We have already had occasion to introduce one or two specimens of Lord Chesterfield's peculiar humour, to which we shall presently make some trifling additions. Notwithstanding the ill-natured sarcasms of Walpole, his conversational powers appear to have been of a high order. "My great object," he writes to his son, "was to make every man I met like me, and every woman love me." A contemporary writer observes,—"The most barren subjects grow fruitful under his culture, and the most trivial circumstances are enlivened and heightened by his address. When he appears in the public walks, the company encroach upon good manners to listen to him, or (if the expression may be allowed) to steal some of that fine wit which animates even his common discourses.

"With poignant wit his converse still abounds,
And charms, like beauty, those it deepest wounds."*

"Lord Chesterfield was esteemed the wittiest man of his time," says Speaker Onslow, "and of a sort that has scarcely been known since the time of King Charles the Second, and revived the memory of the great wits of that age, to the liveliest of whom he was thought not to be unequal."* Of the quickness of his fancy, a few specimens will bear repetition. Once, in the House of Lords, the debate turning on the subject of the late rebellion, Lord Chesterfield observed to the peer next him, "I could effectually annihilate the power of the Pretender; the best way would be to make him Elector of Hanover, for we shall never again send to that country for a king."

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* Gentleman's Magazine for 1740.

To a military friend, who had built a house equally remarkable for the magnificence of its exterior, as for the indifference of its interior arrangements,—"If I were you, General," he said, "I would hire the opposite house to live in, for the purpose of enjoying the prospect."

On another occasion, happening to enter the Haymarket Theatre, a friend inquired of him if he had come from the rival and less popular house in Lincoln's Inn Fields? "Yes," he replied; "but there was no one there but the King and Queen, and as I thought they might be talking about business, I came away."

During the time he was Secretary of State, the ministry being desirous to appoint to a vacant post in the government a person who had rendered himself particularly offensive to the King, Lord Chesterfield was the only member of the cabinet who had courage enough to introduce the subject to his Majesty. Accordingly, he laid a warrant, drawn out in the usual form, and containing the name of the obnoxious individual, before George the Second. The moment the offensive name met the King's eyes, he exclaimed, angrily, "I would rather have the Devil!" "Your Majesty," said Lord Chesterfield, "will make choice of which you please; but I beg to observe, that the warrant is addressed to our right trusty and right well-beloved cousin." This sally had the desired effect, and the King, with a smile, affixed his signature to the document.

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* Coxe's Life of Sir Robert Walpole, v. ii, p. 570.

The exquisite compliment which Pope paid to the wit of Lord Chesterfield is almost too well known to need repetition. They were one day amusing themselves at an inn, when the poet, borrowing a diamond-pointed pencil which Lord Chesterfield was in the habit of carrying about him, wrote extemporaneously on a window-pane in the apartment:—

> "Accept a miracle instead of wit,
> See two dull lines with Stanhope's pencil writ."

And the great poet says of him on another occasion:—

> "How can I, Pulteney, Chesterfield forget,
> While Roman spirit charms, and Attic wit?"

It may be remarked, as another singular compliment paid to Lord Chesterfield, that at the period when Cardinal de Polignac's celebrated poem of Anti-Lucretius was published, England being then at war with France, the work was transmitted by sound of trumpet from

Marshal Saxe to the English general, the Duke of Cumberland, with a request that it might be forwarded to Lord Chesterfield.

According to Lord Chesterfield's panegyrists, his wit was on all occasions tempered by good nature and high breeding. This, however, does not appear to have been invariably the case. He once exclaimed to Anstis, Garter King at Arms, "You foolish man, you do not even know your own foolish business." Again, when his acquaintance, Sir Thomas Robinson,—a man celebrated among his contemporaries for his great height and insufferable dulness,—requested Lord Chesterfield to distinguish him by some poetical notice, his wit got the better of his good-nature, and he gave birth to the following offensive couplet:—

Unlike my subject, will I frame my song;
It *shall* be witty, and it *shan't* be long."

Lord Chesterfield lived on intimate terms with most of the celebrated men of letters of the period, and apparently had no objection to be regarded as the Mecænas of the lesser stars. Among his foreign correspondents were Montesquieu, Algarotti, Voltaire, and the younger Crebillon; and in England he could enumerate Swift, Pope, Gay, Addison, Thomsŏn, Garth, Arbuthnot, and Sir John Vanbrugh as his friends. Of the latter he remarks, that he knew no man who united conversational pleasantry and perfect good humour in so eminent a degree.

Of the kindness and patronage which Lord Chesterfield extended to his literary friends, — considering it was an age when genius required the fostering hand of wealth and influence far more than at the present day, — we have unfortunately but a slight record. We know little more than that he threw sunshine over the short life of Hammond, the author of the "Love Elegies,"* and that he exerted himself to procure subscribers for the charming Fables of Gay. When these celebrated men died, he edited the poems of the one, and was a pall-bearer at the funeral of the other. These, indeed, are but slight tributes to departed genius, yet the merit of them should not be denied to him.

Respecting the claims of Lord Chesterfield to be considered a patron of literature, we have little more to add. His conduct to Dr. Johnson, indeed, reflects little credit on him. However, he alleviated the wants of Aaron Hill ;† and, moreover, when the surly and cynical Dennis was labouring in his old age under the miserable inflictions of penury and disease, he is known, at the generous instigation of Pope, to have extended relief to the snarling critic, though a man whom Lord Chesterfield had no reason to love, and Pope had every inducement to hate.

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* James Hammond, the Author of the "Love Elegies," died under melancholy circumstances, at Lord Cobham's seat at Stowe, on the 7th of June, 1742, in his thirty-third year. Lord Chesterfield, in editing his friend's poems, bestows the warmest encomiums on his judgment, his genius, and his taste.

† Aaron Hill, an indifferent poet but amiable man, was born in 1685. He was at different times manager of Drury Lane theatre and master of the Opera house. Lady Hervey, in one of her letters, mentions her meeting him at Goodwood in 1732, and dwells on the pleasure which she derived from hearing him read aloud. He is now principally known from his misunder-

Lord Chesterfield has himself some claims to be considered a poet. Of the ephemeral poetry of the period, more than one trifle was attributed to him; but, as is usually the case with the careless scribblers of anonymous verse, it is now extremely difficult to distinguish what was really written by him, from that to which he has no claim. Of the various trifles imputed to him, the following seems to possess the most merit, and affords a favourable specimen of his poetical abilities:

"ON LORD ISLAY'S GARDEN AT WHITTON ON HOUNSLOW HEATH.

"Old Islay, to show his fine delicate taste,
In improving his garden purloined from the waste;
Bade his gard'ner one day lay open his views,
By cutting a couple of grand avenues.
No particular prospect his lordship intended,
But left it to chance how his walks should be ended,
With transport and joy he beheld his first view end,
In a favourite prospect—a church, that was ruin'd;

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standing with Pope, who, however, appears to have sincerely regarded the man whom he ridiculed. There is an interesting account of their literary hostilities in D'Israeli's "Quarrels of Authors."

But alas! what a sight did the next cut exhibit,
At the end of the walk hung a rogue on a gibbet!
He beheld it and wept, for it caused him to muse on
Full many a Campbell, that died with his shoes on.
All amazed and aghast at the ominous scene,
He ordered it quick to be closed up again,
With a clump of Scotch firs by way of a skreen.*"

By his wife, Melesina de Schulenberg, Lord Chesterfield had no children. We have seen them occupying separate houses, and, indeed, he seems to have been a suitor for her hand rather with a view of ingratiating himself with the old Duchess of Kendal, and of becoming the inheritor of her vast wealth, than from any ardent attachment which he had conceived for the person of his intended wife. His projects, however, were destined to be signally disappointed, for, with the exception of a trifling legacy, the Duchess bequeathed her wealth to her German relations. With another hoarding dowager, Lord Chesterfield was more successful. The celebrated Duchess of Marlborough,—as a reward for the biting sarcasms which he had inflicted on Sir Robert Walpole's ministry, and for his stedfast opposition to the court,—bequeathed him "her best and largest diamond ring" and the sum of twenty thousand pounds. "The Duchess," says Horace Walpole, "was scarce cold, before he returned to the King's service." The Duchess of Marlborough died in

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* Cole's MSS. v. 31, p. 161.

1744, and in January 1745, Lord Chesterfield was appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.

Probably in uniting himself to Madame de Schulenberg, Lord Chesterfield anticipated her inheriting a portion of the private wealth of her presumed father, George the First. On the death of that monarch, however, George the Second, as is well known, destroyed the will of his father and predecessor; and it is no less certain that Lord Chesterfield commenced an action against the new sovereign for the recovery of 20,000*l*. which George the First was believed to have bequeathed to Lady Chesterfield. According to Horace Walpole, the King became alarmed at the idea of an exposure, and the money was privately paid.

Having no children by his Countess, Lord Chesterfield concentrated his whole affection and anxiety on a natural son—the offspring of a handsome Dutch woman, with whom he had formed a connection at the Hague. It was to this son that he addressed his celebrated letters, of which Dr. Johnson said that they "inculcated the morals of a strumpet and the manners of a dancing-master." And yet, in spite of this cutting satire, Lord Chesterfield's letters to his son constitute collectively one of the most agreeable works in our language, and apparently are unique of their kind in the literature of Europe. Regarding them indeed in one light, namely,—as a code of morality,—and bearing in mind the startling fact, that the plausible impurities which they contain were addressed to his own son, — we cannot sufficiently deprecate their worldly-minded Author. On the other hand, however, these celebrated letters possess a merit and a charm peculiar to themselves. To the Christian they are curious, as showing how imperfect, compared with his own pure standard of morality, is the wretched philosophy of a votary of the world. To the ordinary reader they are fascinating from the heterogeneous mass of knowledge which they display; the insight which they afford into human nature; the graceful and witty style in which they are written; and from their presenting a code of manners, which, though occasionally faulty and sometimes ridiculous, contain some valuable maxims for repairing the rudeness of human nature; for improving and refining the intercourse between man and man; and rendering others happier with little expense to ourselves. Lastly, Lord Chesterfield's letters must ever be especially interesting to the anatomist of the human heart, as laying bare the Machiavelian principles of a statesman, a courtier, and a man of the world; and as displaying the singular spectacle of a man systematically debauching the mind of his own son, while he conscientiously believed he was exalting him in the dignity of a human being.

In regard to Lord Chesterfield's Letters to his son, the author remembers to have met in a MS. collection, with the following severe lines, which do not appear to have been before published;

"Vile Stanhope, demons blush to tell,
In twice three hundred places
Taught his own son the way to hell,
Escorted by the Graces.

But little this degenerate lad
Concerned himself about 'em;
For mean, ungraceful, dull, and bad,
He sneaked to hell without 'em."

These lines, though deservedly severe as far as Lord Chesterfield's false philosophy is concerned, reflect rather too severely on the character of his son. This person, to whom Lord Chesterfield gave his family name of Stanhope, though by his retired habits and reserved manner he signally disappointed the hopes of his worldly-minded father, appears to have been, if not a shining member of society, at least a quiet, inoffensive, and even an accomplished man. Diffident, indeed, he may have been, and unassuming, but the well-known stories of his dulness and awkwardness are doubtless exaggerated. Lady Vere, in a letter to Lady Suffolk, speaks of him as a very agreeable companion; and Sir Charles Hanbury Williams paid him the compliment of inscribing to him one of his lively odes. That Lord Chesterfield was devotedly attached to his unaspiring offspring,—far more, indeed, than from our knowledge of his apparently cold and calculating disposition, we should have been inclined to think possible,—there can be no question. The tutors he provided for him were men of the most distinguished merit; he neglected no opportunity of instilling into him a taste for learning and the elegancies of life; he established him, at different times, at the most polished courts on the continent; and, during his residence abroad, procured his introduction to Algarotti, Maupertuis, Dargens, and many of the most celebrated literati in Europe. All these advantages, however; all the laboured homilies and endearing exhortations of a doting father; were wasted, in the opinion of Lord Chesterfield, on the amiable but unpretending individual whom they were intended to serve. Moreover, when, in 1768, Lord Chesterfield lost his beloved son, he had the misfortune to find, that, so far from having acted up to the worldly precepts which he had endeavoured to inculcate, the object of all his love and solicitude had secretly united himself to a woman without fortune, and had left two children unprovided for.

To the widow and children of his son, Lord Chesterfield extended the hand of kindness. From the former, probably, as a reward for his munificence, and perhaps with a view to their suppression, he regained possession of the celebrated letters which he had addressed to his son. The widow, indeed, is said to have acted most unfairly to her benefactor, by retaining copies of the letters, which she afterwards published. As the world is in possession of the work, it matters little under what circumstances it saw the light. It may be remarked, however, that they were first published in 1774, about a year after Lord Chesterfield's decease; and though it is unquestionable that the world was indebted for their appearance in print to Mr. Stanhope's widow,—thus adding weight to the charge that she had unfairly retained copies of them,—yet, as she states in her advertisement to the work, that the *originals*, in the late Earl's own hand-writing, and sealed with his seal, are in her possession, there is reason to question the fairness of the charge. The letters she formally dedicates to the Prime Minister, Lord North, and as she takes care to remind him that they were once on terms of friendship, probably her family connexions may have been more respectable than her fortune.

During the closing years of his long life, Lord Chesterfield not only suffered severely, and almost constantly, from disease, but latterly deafness was added to his other infirmities. As many as twenty years before his death, we find him speaking of himself as already "half-way down hill," and in one of his latest letters to his son, he complains that his want of hearing has deprived him of the pleasures of society, at an age when he was precluded from every other source of rational enjoyment. And yet this heavy accumulation of human ills was endured by the infidel philosopher, with a dignity and resignation that would have done credit to a better faith. To his intimate friend, Mr. Dayrolles, he writes, on the 10th of July, 1755: —"All my amusements are reduced to the idle business of my little garden, and to the reading of idle books, where the mind is seldom called upon. Notwithstanding this unfortunate situation, my old philosophy comes to my assistance, and enables me to repulse the attacks of melancholy, for I never have one melancholic moment. I have seen and appraised everything in its true light, and at its intrinsic value. While others are outbidding one another at the auction, exulting at their acquisitions, or grieving at their disappointments, I am easy, both from reflection, and experience of the futility of all that is to be got or lost." Again, he writes to the Bishop of Waterford;—"I consider myself as an old decayed vessel, of long wear and tear, brought into the wet-dock to be careened and patched up, not for any long voyage, but only to serve as a coaster for some little time longer. How long that may be, I little know, and as little care; I am unrelative to this world, and this world to me. My only attention now is to live, while I do live in it, without pain, and when I do leave it, to leave it without fear." On one occasion, he sent a message to the celebrated Pulteney, Lord Bath, that he had grown very lean, and very deaf. "Tell him," replied Pulteney, "that I can lend him some fat, and shall be very glad to lend him at any time an ear."

The death of his beloved son was a severe blow to Lord Chesterfield. He was now in his seventy-third year, and from the declining state of his health, was, to all appearance, but little capable of sustaining so severe a shock. He survived the melancholy event, however, more than four years, during which period his bodily infirmities continued to increase. Once, speaking of old Lord Tyrawley, he said;—"We have both been long dead, but we do not choose to have it mentioned."

Lord Chesterfield, during the last months of his life, was afflicted with a diarrhœa, which entirely baffled the art of his physicians, and subsequently proved the immediate cause of his death. "He was afflicted," says Dr. Maty, "with no other illness, and remained to the last free from all manner of pain, enjoying his surprising memory and presence of mind to his latest breath; perfectly composed and resigned to part with life, and only regretting that death was so tardy to meet him." About half an hour before he expired, his valet opened the curtains of his bed, and announced a visit from Mr. Dayrolles. Though he had hardly strength to give utterance to his words, he muttered faintly,—"Give Dayrolles a chair." Thus his last words were those of politeness. It was observed by his physician, Dr. Warren, who was in the apartment at the time,—"Lord Chesterfield's good breeding only quitted him with his life."

The death of Lord Chesterfield took place on the 24th of March, 1773, in his seventy-ninth year. His remains were interred in Audley-street chapel, agreeably with directions contained in his last will.

JOHN, LORD HERVEY.

Eldest son of the first Earl of Bristol.—His birth in 1696.—Educated at Cambridge.—Appointed Gentleman of the Bedchamber to the Prince of Wales.—Returned to Parliament for Edmondsbury.—Called to the House of Peers as Lord Hervey, of Ickworth, during his father's life-time.—Nominated Keeper of the Privy Seal in 1740.—His oratorical powers.—Supports Sir Robert Walpole.—Resigns the Privy Seal on the overthrow of that minister.—His political writings.—His duel with Pulteney.—Circumstances that gave rise to it.—Sir Charles Hanbury Williams's verses on the duel.—Lord Hervey's quarrel with Pope.—The latter satirizes him under the character of Sporus.—Lord Hailes' account of Lord Hervey.—Extract from Archdeacon Coxe.—Personal warfare commenced by Lord Hervey on Pope.—His satirical address to that poet.—Pope's prose letter to Lord Hervey.—Suppressed during their life-time.—Brief Memoir of Hammond, the Poet.—His unfortunate attachment to Catherine Dashwood, ward of Lord Hervey.—The latter's opposition to their union.—Hammond's despondency in consequence, and death in his thirty-third year, 1742.—Dr. Middleton's fulsome dedication of his Life of Cicero to Lord Hervey.—The latter's unamiable character.—Queen Caroline's partiality for him.—His effeminacy and affectation.—His success with the fair sex.—Princess Caroline's romantic attachment to him.—His desertion of Sir Robert Walpole.—Extracts from Horace Walpole's letters.—Lord Hervey's death in 1743.

John, Lord Hervey, the eldest surviving son of John, first Earl of Bristol, was born on the 15th of October, 1696. He completed his education at

Clare Hall, Cambridge, where he took the degree of Master of Arts, and, shortly after quitting the University, was appointed Gentleman of the Bedchamber to the Prince of Wales, afterwards George the Second, who had recently accompanied his father to England.

About the period that he came of age, Lord Hervey was returned to Parliament as member for Edmondsbury, and in May, 1730, was appointed Vice-Chamberlain of the Household, and sworn of the Privy Council. On the 12th of June, 1733, in the lifetime of his father, he was called up to the House of Peers as Lord Hervey, of Ickworth; and on the 1st of May, 1740, was nominated Keeper of the Privy Seal, the highest appointment to which he attained in the state. About the same time he was named one of the Lords Justices for conducting the affairs of the kingdom during the absence of the King in Hanover.

Lord Hervey, when in the House of Commons, and subsequently in the House of Lords, distinguished himself by his oratorical powers; and though his style of eloquence is said to have been somewhat florid and pompous, he was both an able and witty, as well as a frequent speaker. In politics he professed the principles of the Whigs, and remained a zealous supporter of the measures of Sir Robert Walpole, as long as the administration of that minister appeared likely to stand. When Walpole was driven from Parliament in 1742, Lord Hervey was compelled to resign his post of Privy Seal, in order to make way for Lord

Gower. His expulsion from office appears to have been borne with a bad grace. According to Horace Walpole, " he turned patriot on being turned out of place."

During the administration of Sir Robert Walpole, and more especially during the last years which preceded the downfal of that minister, the press, as is well known, teemed with political papers and pamphlets, in which Bolingbroke and Pulteney, on the one hand, and Sir Robert Walpole and Lord Hervey on the other, not only reprobated each other's opinions and principles, but frequently indulged in indecent scurrilities and personal abuse. As regards Lord Hervey individually, it may be remarked that his political writings display a degree of spirit and vigour, which we should have little anticipated from the flimsy style of his versification, and the apparently frivolous and feminine character of the man. His political writings, indeed, are unquestionably among the best of the day, and are particularly distinguished by a spirit of searching bitterness and invective, which made him many enemies, and on one occasion nearly cost him his life. We allude to his duel with William Pulteney, of which, as the circumstances are somewhat remarkable, a brief account may be acceptable to the reader.

In 1730, there appeared in print a pamphlet entitled " Sedition and Defamation displayed," which the world in general attributed to Lord Hervey. This work contained a violent personal attack on Bolingbroke and Pulteney, and consequently when, some time afterwards, the latter replied to it in due form, he vomited forth an acrimonious and most indecent attack on its presumed author, Lord Hervey. Alluding to the effeminate appearance and habits of the latter, Pulteney speaks of his opponent as a thing half man and half woman, and dwells malignantly on those personal infirmities produced by suffering and disease, which Pope afterwards introduced, with no less acrimony and indecency, in his celebrated poetical character of Lord Hervey, under the name of Sporus.

Whatever truth there may have been in the charge of want of manliness, which has been so often and so sedulously brought against Lord Hervey, it was certainly not displayed in his encounter with Pulteney. Immediately on the production of the offensive pamphlet, he sent a message to his maligner, inquiring whether report had correctly assigned to him the authorship of the work. To this Pulteney refused to give a direct answer; but, at the same time, he plainly intimated to the person who delivered the message, that, "whether or no, he was the author of 'the Reply,' he was ready to justify and stand by the truth of any part of it, at what time and wherever Lord Hervey pleased." —"This last message," writes Thomas Pelham to Lord Waldegrave, "your lordship will easily imagine was the occasion of the duel; and, accordingly, on Monday last, between three and four o'clock in the afternoon, they met in the Upper St. James's Park, behind Arlington Street, with their two seconds, who were Mr. Fox and Sir J. Rushout. The two combatants were each of them slightly wounded, but Mr. Pulteney had once so much the advantage of Lord Hervey, that he would have infallibly run my Lord through the body, if his foot had not slipped, and then the seconds took an occasion to part them. Upon which Mr. Pulteney embraced Lord Hervey, and expressed a great deal of concern at the accident of their quarrel; promising, at the same time, that he would never personally attack him again, either with his mouth or his pen. Lord Hervey made him a bow, without giving him any sort of answer, and, to use the common expression, thus they parted." The duel is celebrated by Sir Charles Hanbury Williams, in his "Newer Ode than the Last." Addressing Pulteney, he says:—

"Lord Fanny once
Did play the dunce,
And challenged you to fight;
And he so stood,
To lose his blood,
But had a dreadful fright."

It subsequently appeared that the pamphlet which had originally excited Pulteney's spleen was not written by Lord Hervey. The author was Sir William Young, who, at a later period, admitted the fact to Lord Hardwicke.

But far more celebrated than his feud with

Pulteney was Lord Hervey's quarrel with Pope. The poet, as is well known, under the fictitious names of Lord Fanny and Sporus, diverted himself with the failings of the man whom he had once affected to love. But it was more especially in his memorable character of Sporus, that Pope gave vent to all the bitterness of his nature, and, in sketching the likeness of Lord Hervey, drew the most powerful, and at the time the most odious, poetical portrait that has ever emanated from the pen of genius:—

"Let Sporus tremble! what! that thing of silk!
Sporus, that mere white curd of asses milk!
Satire or sense, alas! can Sporus feel?
Who breaks a butterfly upon a wheel?
Yet let me flap this bug with gilded wings,
This painted child of dirt that stinks and stings;
Whose buzz the witty and the fair annoys,
Yet wit ne'er tastes, and beauty ne'er enjoys:
So well-bred spaniels civilly delight
In mumbling of the game they dare not bite.
Eternal smiles his emptiness betray,
As shallow streams run dimpling all the way.
Whether in florid impotence he speaks,
And, as the prompter breathes, the puppet squeaks;
Or, at the ear of Eve, familiar toad,
Half froth, half venom, spits himself abroad:
In puns or politics, or tales or lies,
Or spite, or smut, or rhymes, or blasphemies;
His wit all see-saw between that and this,
Now high, now low, now master up, now miss,
And he himself one vile antithesis.
Amphibious thing! that acting either part,
The trifling head, or the corrupted heart;
Fop at the toilet, flatterer at the board,
Now trips a lady and now struts a lord.

Eve's tempter thus the Rabbins have expressed,
A cherub's face and reptile all the rest;
Beauty that shocks you, parts that none will trust,
Wit that can creep, and pride that licks the dust."

In order fully to comprehend the severity of the foregoing picture, it is necessary to illustrate it by some cursory remarks. According to Lord Hailes,—"Lord Hervey, having felt some attacks of epilepsy, entered upon and persisted in a very strict regimen, and thus stopped the progress and prevented the effects of that dreadful disease. His daily food was a small quantity of asses' milk and a flour biscuit. Once a week he indulged himself with eating an apple; he used emetics daily. Mr. Pope and he were once friends; but they quarrelled, and persecuted each other with virulent satire. Pope, knowing the abstemious regimen which Lord Hervey observed, was so ungenerous as to call him a mere cheese-curd of asses' milk. Lord Hervey used paint to soften his ghastly appearance: Mr. Pope must have known this also, and therefore it was unpardonable in him to introduce it into his celebrated portrait." The Duchess of Marlborough observes of Lord Hervey, in her "Opinions,"—"He has certainly parts and wit, but is the most wretched, profligate man that ever was born, besides ridiculous; a painted face, and not a tooth in his head." She afterwards adds, that all the world, except Sir Robert Walpole, abhorred him, and it may be remarked, that even Sir Robert Walpole had subsequently sufficient reason to abhor him too.

Absurd and contemptible, however, as Lord Hervey may have been, the conduct of Pope, in dragging the personal infirmities of a fellow-creature before the public, and converting into a matter of reproach the miserable sufferings of humanity and the ravages of disease, has been severely commented upon, not only by his enemies but by his friends. Archdeacon Coxe, alluding to the character of Sporus, observes,—"However I may admire the powers of the satirist, I never could read this passage without disgust and horror; disgust at the indelicacy of the allusions, horror at the malignity of the poet, in laying the foundation of his abuse on the lowest species of satire, personal invective, and, what is still worse, on sickness and debility."

The fact, however, is a remarkable one, and, moreover, seems to have escaped the eager censurers of the conduct of Pope, that the war of scurrility,—the brutal act of exposing and anatomizing the personal infirmities of an opponent,—originated, in fact, not with the poet, but with Lord Hervey himself. Pope, it is true, was the first who commenced the attack in verse, but then it was only by an occasional introduction of the name of "Lord Fanny," in which,—even admitting that Lord Hervey was the person intended,—the allusions are certainly not more severe, nor the licence greater, than has been permitted to the satirist from the days of Juvenal to those of Churchill; and, moreover, they were disgraced by none of those offensive personalities which the poet afterwards introduced so profusely in the character of Sporus. For instance, there is no couplet, in which the name of "Lord Fanny" is introduced, that has greater severity than the following: Pope, alluding to the charge of want of vigour, which he presumes had been brought against his satires, observes:—

> "The lines are weak, another's pleased to say,—
> Lord Fanny spins a thousand such a day."

And again:—

> "Like gentle Fanny's was my flowery theme,
> A painted mistress, or a purling stream."

Lord Hervey was himself a poet, and, consequently, this contemptuous allusion to his poetical powers, was doubtless a source of great annoyance to the literary lord. On the other hand, however, Lord Hervey, as an author, was fair game for the satirist, and, moreover, a mere glance over his almost forgotten verses, evince that Pope's sarcasm was at least as well-merited as it was severe. The poet, in fact, in his capacity of a satirist, had as much right to amuse himself with the namby-pamby verses and maudlin sensibility of Lord Hervey, as a reviewer in our own times is entitled to ridicule the frothy nonsense of a fashionable novel. Pope, indeed, had the advantage of a modern critic, for his attacks were always open, while a modern reviewer stabs, without compunction, in the dark.

Such was the state of the case, when Lord Hervey, smarting under the satire of his opponent, unadvisedly commenced a warfare of wit and poetry with Pope, by retaliating on him in a meagre, poetical epistle, addressed,—"To the Imitator of the Satires of the Second Book of Horace." In this contemptible production, what was wanting in wit was made up by personal abuse; and the poet's distressing and well-known deformity of person was rendered the subject of indecent ribaldry and unfeeling sarcasm. The most remarkable of Lord Hervey's verses are as follow: addressing Pope, he says:—

"In two large columns on thy motley page,
Where Roman wit is striped with English rage:
Where ribaldry to satire makes pretence,
And modern scandal rolls with ancient sense;
Whilst on one side we see how Horace thought,
And on the other how he never wrote;
Who can believe, who view the bad, the good,
That the dull copyist better understood
That spirit, he pretends to imitate,
Than heretofore that Greek he did translate.*
"*Thine is just such an image of his pen,*
As thou thyself art to the sons of men;
Where our own species in burlesque we trace,
A signpost likeness of the human race;
That is at once resemblance and disgrace.

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* This, of course, has reference to Pope's translation of the Iliad, of which Bentley is well-known to have observed, that it was "a pretty poem, but not Homer."

"Thus, whilst with coward hand you stab a name,
And try at least t' assassinate our fame;
Like the first bold assassin's be thy lot;
Ne'er be thy guilt forgiven, or forgot;
But as thou hat'st, be hated by mankind,
And *with the emblem of thy crooked mind*
Marked on thy back, like Cain, by God's own hand,
Wander, like him accursed, through the land."

By these unfeeling allusions to his constitutional infirmities, Pope, the most irritable of poets and the most sensitive of men, was naturally cut to the quick. Following the unworthy example set him by his opponent, he raked up all that approached to hideousness or deformity in the mind and person of Lord Hervey, and, clothing them in verse, which has seldom been surpassed in vigour of language or poetical imagery, gave vent to the deep bitterness of his feelings in the celebrated character of Sporus. One more circumstance may be adduced in favour of Pope; namely, that the "Lord Fanny" of his satires can only be presumed by inference to be Lord Hervey; while, on the other hand, his opponent openly pours forth *his* invectives on the Imitator of the Satires of Horace, of which Pope was the acknowledged author.

One more word respecting this remarkable quarrel. Pope, in the first impulse of his rage, addressed his celebrated prose letter to Lord Hervey, which Warton styles "a master-piece of invective," and on which Warburton and others have bestowed high praise. In this letter he says, "Give me the liberty, my Lord, to tell you why I never replied to those verses on the imitation of Horace:[*] they regarded nothing but my figure, which I set no value upon; and my morals, which I knew needed no defence. Any honest man has the pleasure to be conscious that it is out of the power of the wittiest, nay, of the greatest person in the kingdom, to lessen him in that way, but at the expense of his own truth, honour, and justice." Of this letter Pope appears to have thought well as a composition. To one of his friends he writes,—"There is a woman's war declared against me by a certain Lord; his weapons are the same which women and children use, a pin to scratch, and a squirt to bespatter. I writ a sort of answer, but was ashamed to enter the lists with him, and, after showing it some people, suppressed it: otherwise it was such as was worthy of him and worthy of me." Pope, indeed, suppressed the letter at the time, and it was not published till after his death and that of his rival: according to his own account, it was because he was ashamed to "enter the lists" with an unworthy rival; but, if we are to believe Tyers, it was at the express desire of Queen Caroline, who feared lest, by the publication of this eloquent appeal to public taste and public feeling, her favourite, Lord Hervey, should be rendered contemptible in the eyes of the world. According to Horace Walpole, Lord Hervey "pretended not to thank" Pope for the suppression.*

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[*] At the period when this was written, the character of Sporus had not yet been given to the public. It is inserted, as is well-known, in one of Pope's finest productions, the "Epistle to Arbuthnot," or, as this poem is sometimes absurdly styled, the "Prologue to the Satires." Pope, in his advertisement to the "Epistle," observes,—"This paper is a sort of bill of complaint, begun many years since, and drawn up by snatches, as the several occasions offered. I had no thought of publishing it, till it pleased some persons of rank and fortune [the authors of Verses to the Imitator of Horace, and of an Epistle to a Doctor of Divinity, from a Nobleman at Hampton Court,] to attack, in a very extraordinary manner, not only my writings (of which, being public, the public is judge), but my person, morals, and family; whereof to those who know me not, a truer information may be requisite. Being divided between the necessity to say something of myself, and my own laziness to undertake so awkward a task, I thought it the shortest way to put the last hand to this epistle." The best advice that was ever given to Pope, in regard to his literary quarrels, was that of Swift;—"Give me a shilling," he said, "and I will ensure you that posterity shall never know you had one single enemy excepting those whose memory you have preserved."

There is another poet, though of less note, whose name is intimately connected with that of Lord Hervey; and, as the history of the person in question forms an almost romantic episode in the history of real life, it may not be uninteresting to introduce a few words respecting him. We allude to James Hammond, the author of the "Love Elegies," whose subsequent aberration of mind and untimely death may be indirectly traced to his connection with Lord Hervey.

The Delia of Hammond, is known to have been Miss Catherine Dashwood, a young lady of considerable mental and personal accomplishments. She was a Woman of the Bedchamber to the Queen of George the Second, and a ward of Lord Hervey. The young poet became deeply enamoured of her, and in the course of a long courtship, which was distinguished by the customary characteristics of hope and despondency, addressed to her his graceful love-elegies, which are the more interesting from their being intended for the eye alone of the person to whom they were addressed, and, consequently, describing real and not imaginary ills. "Sincere in his love as in his friednship," says Lord Chesterfield, "he wrote to his mistresses as he spoke to his friends, nothing but the true genuine sentiments of his heart. He sat down to write what he thought, not to think what he should write: it was nature and sentiment only that dictated to a real mistress, not youthful and poetic fancy to an imaginary one."

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* Walpole's Letters, vol. ii. p. 391.

Miss Dashwood returned the love of the poet, and the only obstacle to their union arose from the cold obduracy and determined opposition of Lord Hervey. The reason which the latter gave for witholding his consent, was the inadequate means of the lovers to support themselves creditably in life. Hammond, however, is known to have possessed a private income of four hundred pounds a year, besides the salary which he drew as equerry to the Prince of Wales: moreover, he was regarded in the House of Commons, as a young man of great promise, and lived on intimate terms with several of the most influential persons of the day. The real fact appears to have been that a wide difference of political opinion, and the terms of intimacy subsisting between Hammond and the leaders of the party opposed to Lord Hervey, were the secret of the latter refusing his consent to the match.

The sequel of the story may be soon told. Hammond, on Lord Hervey finally rejecting his overtures, fell seriously ill. His intellects became disordered, and on the 7th of June, 1742, he closed his life, in his thirty-third year, at the classical seat of his friend, Lord Cobham, at Stowe. Miss Dashwood remained true to his memory. She rejected several advantageous opportunities of entering the marriage-state, and though she survived her lover as many as thirty-five years, she retained to the last a tender recollection of his romantic devotedness, and was ever sensibly affected by any allusion to their youthful loves. But we must return to the subject of the present memoir.

To give any correct idea of the character of Lord Hervey appears to be an impracticable task. Dr. Middleton, indeed, in dedicating to him his "Life of Cicero," not only dwells in the most glowing terms on his temperance, his high breeding, and sound sense; but, in speaking of him as a writer, an orator, and a patriot, seems almost to prefer him to the illustrious Roman of whom he writes. When Dr. Middleton, however, in the innocence of his heart, drops for a moment the higher tone of encomium, to speak of his "constant admission" to Lord Hervey on his morning visits, and more especially to thank him for the number of subscribers which he had procured for his work, we guess to what such extraordinary praises owe their birth. The whole, indeed, is a pedantic hyperbole, in which we distrust the truth of the panegyric from its very fulsomeness. It very properly obtained for Middleton a place in the Dunciad :—

> "Narcissus, praised with all a parson's power,
> Looked a white lily sunk beneath a shower."

Lord Hervey, at best, appears to have been an unamiable character; his contemporaries generally speak of him with dislike, and still more frequently with contempt. "His defects," says Archdeacon Coxe, "were extreme affectation, bitterness of invective, prodigality of flattery, and great servility to those above him." It was by the exercise of the last of these qualities, that he seems to have insinuated himself into the affections of George the Second, when, as the Duchess of Marlborough expresses it,—"It was not above six months ago that the King hated him so that he would not suffer him to be one in his diversions at play." It could not, however, have been by servility and adulation alone that Lord Hervey overcame the prejudices of his Sovereign. He unquestionably possessed the art of pleasing in a very high degree; his repartees were once famous; and though frequently sarcastic and ill-natured in his remarks, he could be agreeable and even fascinating when he chose. Queen

Caroline, a woman of strong sense and observation, regarded him with singular partiality. With her, at least, it was his object to please; and, consequently, whether it was from the value which she set on his advice in the cabinet, or admiration of his conversational powers, we find her extending her confidence and friendship to him to the last.

It is not alone to the unmasculine delicacy of Lord Hervey's appearance, nor to the womanish tone of his voice, that we are to trace the character for effeminacy which he obtained among his contemporaries, for he himself seems to have courted it by an affected and almost finical nicety in his habits and tastes. On one occasion, when asked at dinner whether he would have some beef, he answered, with apparent seriousness,—"Beef! don't you know that I never eat beef, nor horse, nor any of those things." Neither his effeminacy, however, his affectation, nor his constitutional infirmities, appear to have undermined his credit with the fair sex. He bore off the beautiful Mary Lepel from a host of rivals; and the Princess Caroline, daughter of George the Second, is known to have conceived so romantic a passion for him, that, at his death, she became the prey of a settled melancholy, which only terminated with her blameless career.

During the latter part of the administration of Sir Robert Walpole, Lord Hervey appears to have been regarded as the ministerial leader in the House of Lords. However, when the star of

Sir Robert began to decline in the political horizon; when the falling minister could no longer command overwhelming majorities in the House of Commons, nor the shouts of the populace in the streets, Lord Hervey seems to have been among the first to forsake the fortunes of his benefactor and friend. On the 7th of January, 1742, exactly five weeks before Sir Robert resigned, we find Horace Walpole writing to Sir Horace Mann,—"I forgot to tell you, that upon losing the first question, Lord Hervey kept away for a week: on our carrying the next great one, he wrote to Sir Robert, how much he desired to see him; 'not upon any business, but Lord Hervey longs to see Sir Robert Walpole.'" And in the same letter, he writes,—"Lord Hervey, is too ill to go to operas; yet, with a coffin-face, is as full of his dirty politics as ever. He *will not* be well enough to go to the house till the majority is certain somewhere, but lives shut up with my Lord Chesterfield and Mr. Pulteney, a triumvirate who hate one another more than any body they could proscribe, had they the power. I dropped in at my Lord Hervey's the other night, knowing my lady had company: it was soon after our defeats. My Lord, who has always professed particularly to me, turned his back on me, and retired for an hour into a whisper with young Hammond,* at the end of the room. Not being at all amazed at one whose heart I knew so well, I stayed on to see more of this behaviour; indeed, to use myself to it. At last he came up to me, and begged this music, which I gave him, and would often again, to see how many times I shall be ill and well with him within this month."

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* James Hammond, the poet: he died in less than six months from the date of Walpole's letter.

Lord Hervey survived the date of this letter only eighteen months. His constitution had never been strong, and, probably, the excitement produced by passing events and the loss of his appointment of Privy Seal, served to hasten his end. He lingered in a wretched state of health, till the 8th of August, 1743, when he expired in the forty-seventh year of his age.

MARY LEPEL,

LADY HERVEY.

Daughter of General Lepel.—Born in 1700.—Appointed at an early age Maid of Honour to the Princess of Wales, afterwards Queen Caroline, and Mistress of the Robes, on the Princess's accession. — Miss Lepel's extraordinary beauty and accomplishments.—Extracts from the Suffolk Correspondence.—Pope's admiration of the young beauty.—His moonlight walk with her in the gardens at Hampton Court, and letter on the subject.—His poetical address to Miss Howe.—Compliments by Gay and Voltaire to Miss Lepel.—Lord Chesterfield's praises of her manners and accomplishments.—Lively verses addressed to her by Lords Chesterfield and Bath.—Her marriage in 1720 to Lord Hervey.—Extract from Lady Montagu's Letters.—Quarrel with Lady Hervey.—Singular particulars respecting its origin. — Lady Hervey's French tastes and partialities.—Her education of her children.—Her irreligious feelings, and repeated attacks of illness. — Churchill's eulogium on her youngest daughter, Lady Caroline.—Lady Hervey's death in 1768.—Posthumous publication of her Letters.—Their character.

Mary Lepel, so celebrated at the Court of the first George for her beauty and wit, was a daughter of Brigadier-general Nicholas Lepel. She was born on the 26th of September, 1700; and at an early age was named one of the Maids of Honour to Queen Caroline, then Princess of

Wales, to whom, on her accession to the throne, she was appointed Mistress of the Robes.

Were we to place credit in half the encomiums which have been heaped on Lady Hervey by her contemporaries, a more gifted or more charming person can scarcely be conceived. Those who knew her best, describe her as possessing, in an eminent degree, that peculiar fascination of manner, which an union of perfect high-breeding and good humour can alone confer: they speak of her, moreover, as on all occasions tempering her extraordinary vivacity with discretion and strong sense; and as uniting all the graceful accomplishments of a woman of fashion, with the qualifications requisite to confer happiness on social life. In point of beauty and good humour, her charming friend, Miss Bellenden was the only one of her contemporaries who could compete with her; while, as regards her wit and general powers of pleasing, even Horace Walpole, difficult as he is to please, awards her unqualified praise, and Gay, Pope, and Voltaire grow equally warm in describing the idol of the day.

Even her friends, when they have occasion to find some slight fault with her, involuntarily mingle praise with their complaints. Mrs. Bradshaw writes to Mrs. Howard, on the 21st of August, 1720,—"I met Madam Lepel coming into town last night: she is a pretty thing, though she never comes to see me, for which, tell her, I will use her like a dog in the winter." And again, Mrs. Howard writes to Lady Hervey herself, a few years afterwards,—"You see I cannot forgive you all the wit in your last letter. Is it because I suspect your sincerity?—or do I envy what I cannot possess? No matter which; you may still always triumph: the world, though you allow it to be but sometimes in the right, will do you a justice that I deny you. You will always be admired; and even I, that condemn you, find I must love you with all my heart."*

Long before she had attained to a fixed rank in society by becoming the wife of Lord Hervey, the lively conversation and extreme beauty of the young Maid of Honour, appear to have excited universal attention. Pope was among the foremost of her admirers, and in one of the most pleasing of his letters, describes his satisfaction at being permitted a walk of three hours with her by moonlight, in the gardens at Hampton Court. "I went by water," he says, "to Hampton Court, unattended by all but my own virtues, which were not of so modest a nature as to keep themselves, or me, concealed; for I met the Prince,† with all his ladies on horseback, coming from hunting. Miss Bellenden and Miss Lepel took me into their protection, (contrary to the laws against harbouring Papists,) and gave me a dinner, with something I liked better, an opportunity of conversation with Mrs. Howard. We all agreed that the life of a maid of honour was of all things the most miserable, and wished that every woman who envied it, had a specimen of it. To eat Westphalia ham in a morning; ride over hedges and ditches on borrowed hacks; come home in the heat of the day with a fever, and (what is worse a hundred times) with a red mark on the forehead from an uneasy hat; all this may qualify them to make excellent wives for fox-hunters, and bear abundance of ruddy-complexioned children. As soon as they can wipe off the sweat of the day, they must simper an hour, and catch cold in the Princess's apartment: from thence (as Shakespeare has it,) to dinner, with what appetite they may, and after that, till midnight, work, walk, or think, which they please. I can easily believe no lone house in Wales, with a mountain and a rookery, is more contemplative than this Court; and as a proof of it, I need only tell you Miss Lepel walked with me three or four hours by moonlight, and we met no creature of any quality but the King, who gave audience to the vice-chamberlain, all alone, under the garden wall."

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* Suffolk Correspondence, vol. i. pp. 69, and 323.

† The Prince of Wales, afterwards George II.

Pope in the following poetical trifle, addressed to another of the maids of honour, Miss Howe, again familiarly introduces the name of Miss Lepel:—

"ANSWER TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTION OF MISS HOWE.*

"What is prudery?—
'Tis a beldam,
Seen with wit and beauty seldom,

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* Sophia Howe, maid of honour to Queen Caroline, when

'Tis a fear that starts at shadows ;
'Tis (no, 't isn't) like Miss Meadows :*
'Tis a virgin hard of feature,
Old, and void of all good-nature ;
Lean and fretful ; would seem wise,
Yet plays the fool before she dies.
'Tis an ugly, envious shrew,
That rails at dear Lepel and you.

Princess of Wales. This unfortunate young lady, whose frailty caused considerable sensation at the Court of George the First, was a daughter of General Emanuel Scroop Howe, by Ruperta, an illegitimate daughter of Prince Rupert. Her love of admiration, her wild frivolity, and indifference to consequences, are sufficiently displayed in the only two of her letters that have been handed down to us, which are to be found in the Suffolk Correspondence. In one of these letters, addressed to Mrs. Howard, she says,—"Of one thing, I am more sensible than ever I was, of my happiness in being *maid of honour ;* I wont say 'God preserve me so,' neither, that would not be so well." Gay, in his "Welcome to Pope from Greece," seems to refer to the unsettled character of the giddy girl, when he says,—

——"Perhaps Miss Howe came there by chance,
Nor knows with whom, nor why she comes along."

Miss Howe, in one of her letters above referred to, mentions incidentally her being so affected by some ludicrous coincidence, while attending divine service in Farnham Church, as to

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* Another maid of honour, whose prudery caused much amusement to the Court. She held the office for a considerable period ; and, as Lord Chesterfield speaks of the probability of her having the gout, and as Lady Hervey, in one of her letters, styles her "old Meadows," she probably never entered the married state. Dodington, in one of his trifles, couples her name with that of Lady Hervey :—

"As chaste as Hervey or Miss Meadows."

She was sister to Sir Sidney Meadows.

Gay, in his fine copy of verses entitled "Welcome from Greece to Mr. Pope upon finishing his Translation of the Iliad," describes the poet as welcomed by his beautiful friend;

> "Now Hervey, fair of face, I mark full well,
> With thee, youth's youngest daughter, sweet Lepel.

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burst into an uncontrollable fit of laughter. It was on this occasion, that the Duchess of St. Albans, chiding her for her irreverence, and telling her "*she could not do a worse thing,*" —"I beg your grace's pardon," she replied, "but I can do *a great many worse things.*" The betrayer of Miss Howe was Anthony Lowther, brother of Henry, Viscount Lonsdale. In Sir Charles Hanbury Williams' poem, describing the "Mourning" of Isabella, Duchess of Manchester, General Churchill thus introduces the story to a circle of listening gossips:—

> "The General found a lucky minute now
> To speak.—"Ah, ma'am, you did not know Miss Howe!"
> "I 'll tell you all her history," he cried.
> At this, Charles Stanhope gaped extremely wide,
> Poor Dicky sat on thorns; her Grace turned pale,
> And Lovel trembled at the impending tale.
> "Poor girl! faith she was once extremely fair,
> Till worn by love, and tortured by despair,
> Her pining looks betrayed her inward smart;
> Her breaking face foretold her breaking heart.
> At Leicester House her passion first began,
> And Nanty Lowther was a pretty man:
> But when the Princess did to Kew remove,
> She could not bear the absence of her love:
> Away she flew ———"

Miss Howe is known to have been the heroine of Lord Hervey's poetical epistle from Monimia to Philocles, where she pours forth a long complaint against her lover's cruelty, in lines which have little pathos and less poetry. She died, apparently of a broken heart, in 1726, having survived the loss of her reputation only a very few years.

But perhaps the most remarkable tribute paid to her charms was by Voltaire, who did her the singular honour of celebrating her beauty in English verse: his lines, which will be found in Dodsley's collection, are as follow:

"To Lady Hervey.

"Hervey, would you know the passion,
You have kindled in my breast?
Trifling is the inclination
That by words can be expressed.

In my silence see the lover;
True love is by silence known;
In my eyes you'll best discover,
All the power of your own."

In noticing the various compliments paid to Lady Hervey by her contemporaries, the eulogiums heaped on her taste and accomplishments by so celebrated an arbiter of taste and fashion as Lord Chesterfield, must not be passed over in silence. He writes to his son 22nd of October, 1750,—"Lady Hervey, to my great joy, because to your great advantage, passes all this winter at Paris. She has been bred all her life at Courts, of which she has acquired all the easy good breeding and politeness, without the frivolousness. She has all the reading that a woman should have, and more than any woman need have; for she understands Latin perfectly well, though she wisely conceals it. No woman ever had, more than she has,—*le ton de la parfaitement bonne compagnie, les manières engageantes, et le je ne sçais quoi qui plait.* Desire her to reprove and correct any, and every, the least error and inaccuracy in your manner, air, address, &c., no woman in Europe can do it so well; none will do it more willingly, or in a more proper and obliging manner." Again Lord Chesterfield writes to his son on the 28th of February following:—"The word *pleasing*, always puts one in mind of Lady Hervey: pray tell her, that I declare her responsible to me for your pleasing; that I consider her as a pleasing Falstaff, who not only pleases herself, but is the cause of pleasing in others."

We will conclude our notices of the encomiums heaped on Miss Lepel, with the following lively verses believed to be the joint composition of Lords Chesterfield and Bath. The reader will perceive that they are singularly characteristic of the manners of the last age, inasmuch as a lady of the present day would probably be more ready to denounce them for their impropriety, than to value them as a panegyric.

"The Muses quite jaded with rhyming,
To Molly Mogg bid a farewell;
But renew their sweet melody chiming,
To the name of dear Molly Lepel.

Bright Venus yet never saw bedded
So perfect a beau and a belle,
As when Hervey the handsome was wedded
To the beautiful Molly Lepel.

So powerful her charms, and so moving,
They would warm an old monk in his cell,
Should the Pope himself ever go roaming,
He would follow dear Molly Lepel.

If to the seraglio you brought her,
Where for slaves their maidens they sell,
I'm sure tho' the Grand Seignior bought her,
He 'd soon turn a slave to Lepel.

Had I Hanover, Bremen, and Verden,
And likewise the Duchy of Zell!
I 'd part with them all for a farthing,
To have my dear Molly Lepel.

Or were I the King of Great Britain,
To choose a minister well,
And support the throne that I sit on,
I 'd have under me Molly Lepel.

Of all the bright beauties so killing,
In London's fair city that dwell,
None can give me such joy were she willing,
As the beautiful Molly Lepel.

What man would not give the great Ticket,
To his share if the benefit fell,
To be but one hour in a thicket,
With the beautiful Molly Lepel.

Should Venus now rise from the ocean,
And naked appear in her shell,
She would not cause half the emotion,
That we feel from dear Molly Lepel.

Old Orpheus, that husband so civil,
He followed his wife down to hell,
And who would not go to the devil,
For the sake of dear Molly Lepel.

Her lips and her breath are much sweeter,
Than the thing which the Latins call *mel;*
Who would not thus pump for a metre,
To chime to dear Molly Lepel.

In a bed you have seen pinks and roses;
  Would you know a more delicate smell,
Ask the fortunate man who reposes
  On the bosom of Molly Lepel.

'Tis a maxim most fit for a lover,
  If he kisses he never should tell:
But no tongue can ever discover
  His pleasure with Molly Lepel.

Heaven keep our good king from a rising,
  But that rising who 's fitter to quell,
Than some lady with beauty surprising,
  And who should that be but Lepel?

If Curll would print me this sonnet,
  To a volume my verses should swell;
A fig for what Dennis says on it,
  He can never find fault with Lepel.

Then Handel to music shall set it;
  Thro' England my ballad shall sell;
And all the world readily get it,
  To sing to the praise of Lepel.

On the 25th of October, 1720, when in her twentieth year, Miss Lepel accepted the hand of the celebrated John, Lord Hervey. About the period of their marriage, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu writes to her sister, Lady Mar, —"The most considerable incident that has happened a good while was the ardent affection that Mrs. Hervey, and her dear spouse,* took to me.

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* Lord Hervey at this period had not attained to the title. His elder brother, Carr, Lord Hervey, survived till the 15th November, 1723.

They visited me twice or thrice a day, and were perpetually cooing in my rooms. I was complaisant a great while; but, (as you know,) my talent has never lain much that way; I grew at last so weary of those birds of paradise, I fled to Twickenham, as much to avoid their persecutions as for my own health, which is still in a declining way." Notwithstanding the "perpetual cooing" here referred to, the married life of Lord and Lady Hervey is said to have been distinguished, at a later period, rather by a well-bred civility, than any apparent remains of an ardent or romantic attachment.*

The misunderstanding which took place between Pope and her husband, effectually put an end to the long and friendly intercourse which had existed between Lady Hervey and the great poet. Pope, however, though he grew to detest the husband, was still ready to do justice to the wife; and in his memorable letter to Lord Hervey, pays a last tribute to the "merit, beauty, and vivacity," of his charming friend.

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* See Lady M. W. Montagu's Works, v. 1. p. 69. Ed. 1837. On the contrary, the editor of Lady Hervey's Letters, observes,—"Neither her own vivacity nor the indulgence of a court appear to have betrayed Lady Hervey into the neglect of any of her duties. She was fondly attached to Lord Hervey's person, she respected and admired his talents, and revered his memory." *Lady Hervey's Letters, Biog. Sketch.* p. 9. Lady Hervey herself writes to the Reverend Edmund Morris, on the 31st. of October, 1743, about two months after her husband's death,—"The misfortunes Mrs. Phipps can have met with are few and slight compared to those I have experienced; I see and feel the greatness of this last in every light, but I will struggle to the utmost, and though I know, at least I think, I can never be happy again, yet I will be as little miserable as possible, and will make use of the reason I have to soften, not to aggravate, my affliction." *Lady Hervey's Letters,* p. 14.

The friendship, too, which had existed between Lady Hervey and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu appears to have been of short duration. A coldness sprang up between them, to which we shall presently have to allude, and it seems to be in consequence of Lady Mary considering herself the party aggrieved, that we are to attribute those slighting and almost ill-natured remarks in her celebrated letters, whenever she has occasion to introduce the name of Lady Hervey. The circumstances of their misunderstanding were as follow:—

One of Lady Hervey's most valued friends was a Mrs. Murray, a grand-daughter of the first Earl of Marchmont, and a woman of considerable accomplishments of person as well as mind.*

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* Griselda Baillie, daughter of Mr. Baillie of Jerviswood, and a near relation of Bishop Burnet, became the wife, in 1710, of Mr. afterwards Sir A. Murray, of Stanhope. She died in 1759. Lady Hervey says of her, in recording her loss,— "Never in my long life, did I ever meet with a creature in all respects like her: many have excelled her, perhaps, in particular qualities; but none that ever I met with have equalled her in all. Sound good sense, strong judgment, great sagacity, strict honour, truth, and sincerity; a most affectionate disposition of mind; constant and steady; not obstinate; great indul-

About the month of October, 1721, Mrs. Murray obtained a most unenviable notoriety, in consequence of a criminal attempt made upon her by one of her own footmen, a man of the name of Arthur Grey. This individual, it appears, entered her chamber in the middle of the night, and presenting a pistol at her breast, swore that, unless she would consent to gratify his passion, he would take her life. Either terror or virtue, however, gave strength to her arm, and she had already succeeded in wresting the pistol from her assailant, when her screams brought her the assistance which she required. The man was immediately seized, and Mrs. Murray giving her evidence against him at the Old Bailey, he was sentenced to be transported for life.

The publicity given to this unfortunate affair must have been sufficiently painful to most women; while, to a person who, like Mrs. Mur-

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gence to others; a most sweet, cheerful temper; and a sort of liveliness and good-humour, that promoted innocent mirth wherever she came." *Lady Hervey's Letters*, p. 254. Horace Walpole writes to Sir Horace Mann on the 22nd of June, 1759, —"A much older friend of yours is just dead, my Lady Murray. She caught her death by too strict attendance on her sister, Lady Binning, who has been ill. They were a family of love, and break their hearts for her. She had a thousand good qualities; but no mortal was ever so surprised as I when I was first told that she was the nymph Arthur Grey would have ravished. She had taken care to guard against any more such dangers by more wrinkles than ever twisted round a human face." *Walpole's Letters*, v. 3, p. 4458.

ray, moved in a certain sphere of society, the notoriety she had acquired could not fail to be a source of the deepest affliction. The position of Mrs. Murray, moreover, was rendered still more distressing by the publication of more than one offensive pasquinade on the subject of her recent misfortune, which, as is usually the case with similar malicious productions, were purchased and read with the greatest avidity. Of these effusions, there were two which excited particular attention; the one, a gross ballad, and the other a long and indelicate copy of verses entitled, "Epistle from Arthur Grey, the Footman."* Both of these infamous productions were attributed to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu; but though the former was unquestionably the production of her pen, we find her repeatedly denying the authorship of the latter. The fact, however, of her having been the parent, if of only one of these galling attacks, is sufficient to bring home to her the charge of unwarrantably aggravating the distress of an unoffending member of her own sex, by trumpeting forth a misfortune which had already obtained sufficient publicity. That Mrs. Murray believed her to be the author of both lampoons, is evident. Lady Mary herself informs us, that on every occasion of her meeting the subject of her unfeeling satire in public, the latter never failed to display her indignation and disgust: on one occasion, in particular,—"she was pleased to attack me," says Lady Mary, "in very Billingsgate language at a masquerade, where she was as visible as ever she was in her own clothes." Lady Hervey warmly and generously sided with her injured friend; and it was probably her having dropped some expressions of disgust at Lady Mary's conduct that produced from the latter those slighting remarks on an almost faultless character, to which we have already had occasion to allude.

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* Horace Walpole writes to Sir Horace Mann on the 24th of November, 1747:—"Mr. Shute agrees with me: he says, for the epistle from Arthur Grey, scarce any woman could have written it, and no man, for a man who had had experience enough to paint such sentiments so well, would not have had warmth enough left."—*Walpole's Letters*, vol. ii. p. 207. Mr. Dallaway, Lady M. W. Montagu's biographer, remarks that "the epistle of Arthur Grey has true 'Ovidian tenderness.'" This, of course, is exaggerated praise; nevertheless, the "Epistle" has some merit as a composition, though possessing certainly more of the indecency of Ovid, than either his tenderness or his grace.

Among various interesting reminiscences of Lady Bute, (daughter of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu,) she remembered Lady Hervey to have been distinguished by the exquisite grace of her manners, which she described as somewhat marked by a "foreign tinge." Lady Hervey, indeed, was half a Frenchwoman. During her widowhood, she paid long and frequent visits to France; we find her intimate friends frequently bantering her on her French tastes and French habits; while, from her maiden name of Lepel, we may conclude that her family were originally natives of that country. Lady Chesterfield writes to a lady at Paris on the 30th of December, 1751;—"We look upon Lady Hervey as having forsaken her own country, and being naturalized a Frenchwoman. I regret, but do not blame her, for I know others that would do the same if they could." Again, she writes to the same correspondent on the 3rd of May, 1753,—"You will soon see Lady Hervey again; she is heartily sick of London, and longs to be at Paris. I shall lament her absence, but cannot blame her taste; it comes into my system of philosophy." Lady Hervey, in her letters, alludes to her foreign partialities as if they were notorious among her friends; and Horace Walpole, in his correspondence, speaks incidentally of her as "doting" on everything French.

We have now brought our notices of Lady Hervey very nearly to a close. After the death of her husband, she resided principally with his father, the Earl of Bristol, dedicating herself to the performance of her social duties, and more especially to the education of her children. By Lord Hervey she was the mother of four sons and four daughters:—of the former, George,* Augustus, and Frederick, were successively Earls of Bristol, and William, the youngest, was a member of Parliament, and a general in the army. Of the daughters,—Lepel married Constantine, Lord Mulgrave; Lady Mary married George Fitzgerald, Esq.; and Lady Emily and Lady Caroline died unmarried. Horace Walpole says of the elder daughter, in one of his letters,—"she is a fine, black girl, as masculine as her father should be." But it seems to have been the youngest, Lady Caroline, who inherited, in the

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* George, second Earl of Bristol, inherited the effeminate appearance, and, it was thought, the effeminate character of his father: like his father, however, he knew how to resent an insult when thoroughly provoked. Horace Walpole writes to Sir Horace Mann, 25th of February, 1750,—"About ten days

ago, at the new Lady Cobham's assembly, Lord Hervey was leaning over a chair, talking to some women, and holding his hat in his hand. Lord Cobham came up and spit in it!—and then, with a loud laugh, turned to Nugent, and said,—'Pay me my wager!' In short, he had laid a guinea that he committed this absurd brutality, and that it was not resented. Lord Hervey, with great temper and sensibility, asked if he had any farther occasion for his hat?—'Oh! I see you are angry!'—'Not very well pleased.' Lord Cobham took the fatal hat, and wiped it, made a thousand foolish apologies, and wanted to pass it off as a joke. Next morning he rose with the sun, and went to visit Lord Hervey; so did Nugent: he would not see them, but wrote to the Spitter, (or, as he is now called, Lord Gob'em,) to say, that he had affronted him very grossly before company; but having involved Nugent in it, he desired to know to which he was to address himself for satisfaction. Lord Cobham wrote to him a most submissive answer, and begged pardon both in his own and Nugent's name. Here it rested for a few days; till getting wind, Lord Hervey wrote again to insist on an explicit apology under Lord Cobham's own hand, with a rehearsal of the excuses that had been made to him. This, too, was complied with, and the *fair* conqueror shows all the letters."—*Walpole's Letters*, vol. ii. p. 319. For a further account of this disreputable frolic, see *Wraxall's Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 128, *et seq.*

most eminent degree, the attractions of her mother. Churchill celebrates,—

> "That face, that form, that dignity, that ease,
> Those powers of pleasing, with that will to please,
> By which Lepel, when in her youthful days,
> Even from the currish Pope extorted praise,
> We see, transmitted, in her daughter shine,
> And view a new Lepel in Caroline!"

Lady Hervey expired on the 2nd of September, 1768, having nearly completed the sixty-eighth year of her age. For many years she had suffered severely from the gout,* the frequent attacks of which she endured with extraordinary resignation and unrepining gentleness.

Horace Walpole writes to the Earl of Hertford on the 16th of December, 1763,—"Poor Lady Hervey desires you will tell Mr. Hume how incapable she is of answering his letter. She has been terribly afflicted for these six weeks with a complication of gout, rheumatism, and a nervous complaint. She cannot lie down in her bed, nor rest two minutes in her chair: I never saw such continued suffering." Two days before she expired, she wrote to her son, the Earl of Bristol,—"I feel my dissolution coming on; but I have no pain: what can an old woman desire more?" Walpole, in recording this anecdote, observes,—"This was consonant to her usual propriety:—yes, propriety is grace, and thus everybody may be graceful, when other graces are fled."*

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* This disease, which was hereditary in Lady Hervey's family, she entailed on her daughter, Mrs. Phipps, afterwards Lady Mulgrave, and probably on others of her children. Lady Hervey writes to the Rev. E. Morris, 24th of October, 1747:—"Poor Mrs. Phipps, that young, abstemious, careful woman, has had a tedious rheumatism, which at last terminated in a severe fit of the gout. She is now well of both; but what must that poor dear creature expect, who at four-and-twenty is wrapped up in flannel with the gout!"—*Lady Hervey's Letters*, p. 107.

It is to be feared, however, that the exemplary patience which Lady Hervey displayed during her repeated illnesses, originated in no degree from any consolation which she derived from her religious faith. The example of infidelity set her by her husband, and apparently the pernicious sophistry of their mutual friend, Dr. Middleton,† produced an unfortunate effect on her otherwise strong mind; and though she refrained from obtruding her peculiar tenets on others, her own confidence in the truth of revealed religion was unquestionably weakened, if not entirely destroyed.

Posterity, of late years, has acquired an interesting memento of Lady Hervey, in the form of a volume of her epistolary correspondence. To the general reader, indeed, the letters in question will convey a feeling of disappointment, for we search in vain for that playful wit and fascinating vivacity for which her contemporaries have so universally given her credit. The whole of these letters, however, were written after she had completed her forty-second year; at a period when the hey-day of life had passed away; and, moreover, when misfortune had quenched the buoyancy of her spirits, and thrown its shadows over her brow. But, on the other hand, they portray the character of Lady Hervey in its best light; they afford valuable evidence of her strong sense, her refined taste, and real goodness of heart; and are equally interesting as a memorial of a courtly beauty of the last age, and as affording a faithful and pleasing picture of an amiable and highly-cultivated mind.

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* Walpole's Letters, vol. iv. p. 335, vol. v. p. 226.

† Dr. Conyers Middleton,—a sceptical divine, and the well-known author of the Life of Cicero,—was the son of a clergyman, and was born at York in 1683. His "Discourse on the Miraculous Powers" supposed to have been vested in the early Christian Church, led the world to believe that he was a free-thinker; and his letters to Lord Hervey have since substantiated the fact. As a divine, a moralist, and a philosopher, he should have taken especial care to maintain his private character in good repute: and yet the same man,—who pro-

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fessed that "Providence had placed him beyond the temptation of sacrificing philosophic freedom to the servilities of dependence,"—is known, in the most shameless manner, to have subscribed the thirty-nine articles for the mere purpose of enjoying the living of Hascombe. "Though there are many things in the Church," he says, "which I wholly dislike, yet, while I am content to acquiesce in the ill, I should be glad to taste a little of the good." The apology was worthy of his principles. Dr. Middleton died on the 28th of July, 1750, in the sixty-seventh year of his age.

LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU.

Her birth in 1690.—Her early love of reading.—Teaches herself Latin, and translates Epictetus.—Anecdote of her father related by herself.—Her acquaintance with Mr. Wortley Montagu.—His literary tastes.—He proposes for her hand to her father, and is rejected.—He elopes with, and is privately married to, her. — Lady Mary's first appearance at St. James's.—Attends the evening parties of George the First.—Accompanies her husband on his embassy to Constantinople.—Her familiarity with the Turkish ladies.—Anecdote.—Introduces into England the Oriental practice of inoculation for the small pox.—Returns home, and takes a house at Twickenham.—Her intimacy with Pope.—Addison warns her against him.—Her subsequent quarrel with Pope.—Her account of its origin.—Her splenetic feelings towards him.—Retires to the continent.—Her separation from her husband.—Extracts from Horace Walpole's letters.—Pope's remarks on Lady Mary's want of cleanliness.—Anecdote of Lady Mary.—Indecency of some of her letters.—Brief memoir of her son, Edward Wortley Montague.—His eccentricities abroad.—Extract from Horace Walpole's letters.—Mr. Montagu disinherited on his father's death.—His extraordinary advertisement in the Public Advertiser.—His sudden death at Lyons.—His literary production.—Lady Mary's return to England after the death of her husband.—Horace Walpole's description of her.—Her death.

Lady Mary Pierrepont, afterwards so celebrated as Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, was the eldest daughter of Evelyn, Duke of Kingston, by Lady Mary Fielding, daughter of William, Earl of Denbigh. She was born at Thoresby, in Nottinghamshire, about the year 1690.

When she was about four years old, Lady Mary had the misfortune to lose her mother.* The loss was an irreparable one; for it was probably owing to the want of proper female guardianship in her youth, and to the absence of a mother's anxious watchfulness, that we are to attribute many of those faults and fooleries which subsequently distinguished her irregular career. Her father, too, was a man little qualified to perform so important a trust as the guardianship of a volatile and high-spirited girl. Figuring merely as one of the well-bred libertines of the period, and preferring the pursuit of pleasure to the discharge of his domestic duties, he seems to have troubled himself little with the education or moral improvement of his child.* A thirst after knowledge, however, formed an early and remarkable feature in Lady Mary's character. "When I was young," she observed to Spence, "I was a vast admirer of Ovid's Metamorphoses, and that was one of the chief reasons that set me upon the thought of stealing the Latin language. Mr. Wortley was the only person to whom I communicated my design; and he encouraged me in it. I used to study five or six hours a day for two years, in my father's library, and so got that language whilst everybody thought I was reading nothing but novels and romances." According to her biographer, Dallaway, her father for the most part entrusted her education to the tutors of his son, from whom she acquired a knowledge of the Greek, Latin, and French languages. We have, however, the authority of Lady Mary herself that she taught herself Latin; and in regard to her knowledge of Greek, though professedly the author of a translation of Epictetus, we learn from Lady Bute that her mother had, in fact, but little acquaintance with that language. Not impossibly she had the advantage of a Latin version, to which circumstance we may add the probability of her having received material assistance from Bishop Burnet, who is known to have superintended her labours.

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* In reference to the fact stated in the text, namely, that Lady M. W. Montagu was only four years old when she lost her mother, it is curious to find, in the *eleventh* edition of "The Curiosities of Literature," the following rather remarkable anachronism:—"We have lost much literature by the illiberal or malignant *descendants* of learned and ingenious persons. Many of Lady Wortley Montagu's letters have been destroyed, I have been informed, by her mother, who imagined that the family honours were lowered by the addition of those of literature: some of her best letters, recently published, were found buried in an old trunk. It would have mortified her ladyship's mother to have heard that her daughter was the Sévigné of Britain."—*Cur. of Literature*, p. 19, Ed. 1839. In recording this error, it is far from the author's intention to attempt to derogate from the general merit and accuracy of one of the most charming works in our language. The writer of an article in the *Quarterly Review* (vol. xxiii. p. 414,) has fallen, it may be remarked, into exactly the same error as Mr. D'Israeli.—*See Lady M. W. Montagu's Works,* vol. i. p. 3. *Edition by Lord Wharncliffe.*

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* The father of Lady M. W. Montagu was Evelyn Pierrepont, fifth Earl of Kingston, created 23rd of December, 1706, Marquis of Dorchester; and, on the 29th of July, 1715, Duke of Kingston. Macky says of him,—"He has a very good estate, is a very fine gentleman, of good sense, well bred, and a lover of the ladies; entirely in the interest of his country, makes a good figure, is of a black complexion, and well made." The Duke died in 1726, and was succeeded in his titles by his grandson, Evelyn Pierrepont, the second and last Duke of Kingston.

That her father, however, though he neglected, was nevertheless proud of the attainments and beauty of his child, is evident from the following lively anecdote which Lady Mary, in after-life, took great pleasure in recalling. "As a leader of the fashionable world, and a strenuous Whig in party, he of course belonged to the Kit-cat club.* One day, at a meeting to choose toasts for the year, a whim seized him to nominate her, then not eight years old, a candidate; alleging that she was far prettier than any lady on their list. The other members demurred, because the rules of the club forbade them to elect a beauty whom they had never seen. ‘Then you shall see her,’ cried he; and, in the gaiety of the moment, sent orders home to have her finely dressed, and brought to him at the tavern, where she was received with acclamations, her claim unanimously allowed, her health drunk by every one present, and her name engraved in due form upon a drinking-glass. The company consisting of some of the most eminent men in England, she went from the lap of one poet, or patriot, or statesman, to the arms of another, was feasted with sweetmeats, overwhelmed with caresses, and, what perhaps already pleased her better than either, heard her wit and beauty loudly extolled on every side. Pleasure, she said, was too poor a word to express her sensations; they amounted to ecstacy: never again, throughout her whole future life, did she pass so happy a day.”*

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* The meetings of the celebrated Kit-cat club were originally held at the Fountain Tavern in the Strand, the landlord of which was one Christopher Cat, from whom the club borrowed their name. He was famous for his mutton-pies, which was always a standing-dish at their meetings. In a Tory pasquinade of the period we find,—

> "Hence did the assembly's title first arise,
> And Kit-Cat wits sprung first from Kit-Cat pies."

The Kit-cat club, at a later period, held their meetings at the residence of their secretary, the celebrated Jacob Tonson, at Barn Elms. This house, which is rendered still more interesting by having formerly been inhabited by Cowley, the poet, is still standing.

Another disadvantage (arising from her father being a widower) which Lady Mary had to encounter as she increased in years, was the prevalence of male society at his table. A woman, thrown into constant intercourse with the other sex, will unquestionably find her wit sharpened, and will acquire increased confidence in her own powers; moreover, where the society is of a superior order, she may add to her stock of knowledge, and improve her taste; but, on the other hand, the finer feelings of the woman are imperceptibly destroyed, and she acquires that masculine tone of thought and speech, which was peculiarly the characteristic of Lady Mary.

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* Lady Mary Wortley Montagu’s Works, vol. i. p. 5, edition by Lord Wharncliffe.

Among the duties which, as the mistress of the domestic portion of her father's establishment, Lady Mary was called upon to perform, was the then formidable task of doing the honours of his table. People still cling to the barbarism of carving huge joints, and inhaling their obnoxious smells, at dinner; but, in the commencement of the last century the case was still worse: not only was it imperative on the lady of the house to teaze her guests till they eat to repletion; but it was necessary that every guest should be individually helped, and every joint operated upon, by her hand. Lady Mary used to mention, as curious illustrations of the fashionable manners of her youth, that carving-masters used to attend young ladies for the purpose of perfecting them in the art, and that she herself had been compelled to take lessons from one of these professors three times a week. She added, that such was the laborious task of presiding at table on one of her father's public days, that she was always obliged to eat her own dinner beforehand.*

Lady Mary was in the zenith of her beauty, when she formed the acquaintance of Mr. Edward Wortley Montagu, a man, apparently, of some talent, of sound sense, of a classical taste, and of an original cast of mind. On the other hand, he was miserly in his habits; and we glean from Lady Mary's letters to him, that no flattery was too gross for his palate. Still it is evident, from the literary correspondence of the period, that he was the intimate friend of Addison, and that Steele, Congreve, and Garth were among his acquaintance. Thus, a congenial taste for literature and wit existed between Lady Mary and himself. He naturally became enamoured of a woman, who, to the possession of great beauty, superadded those intellectual qualities which he most valued and admired; and Lady Mary, though she confessed to him her inability to return his passion with a warmth equal to his own, yet freely admitted that she entertained a regard and partiality for him which she had never experienced towards any other suitor. On this, Montagu made his proposals to her father; but, either from an inability to make a settlement, or rather, as it would appear, from a prejudice against settling property on unborn children, of whose good or bad qualities he could know nothing, his offers were peremptorily rejected by the Duke of Kingston.

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* Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's Works, vol. i. p. 11, edition by Lord Warncliffe.

The lovers, indeed, still kept up a correspondence, but it appears by Lady Mary's letters, written at the period, that it was constantly on the point of being broken off,—not, indeed, by the vigilance and interference of her father,—but by perpetual jealousies and mistrusts on the part of Mr. Montagu, whose good sense pointed out to him how little suited they were to each other, and that, however charming Lady Mary might be as a mistress, she was little calculated to confer happiness on him as a wife. Still, he was unable to extricate himself from the toils of wit and beauty, and when Lady Mary announced to him her father's fixed determination to unite her to another person, the passion of the lover drowned the reflections of the man of sense, and having persuaded his mistress to elope with him, they were privately married by a special licence, bearing date 12th August, 1712.

On the accession of George the First to the throne, the friends of Mr. Wortley came into power, and he received the reward of his parliamentary exertions by being appointed a Lord of the Treasury. The duties of his office obliged him, of course, to reside principally in London, and, consequently, Lady Mary was recalled from the solitude of Wharncliffe, where she had hitherto resided since her marriage. According to her biographer, Dallaway,—"her first appearance at St. James's was hailed with that universal admiration which beauty, enlivened by wit, incontestably claims." She speedily grew into favour with George the First, and in his son, afterwards George the Second, seems to have excited a warmer sentiment. One evening, the Prince happening suddenly to cast his eyes on her, desired the princess, who was playing at cards in another part of the apartment, to mark how very becomingly Lady Mary was dressed. To be interrupted in the excitement of play, and for the purpose too of noting the loveliness of a rival, must have been sufficiently disagreeable to the Princess, and, consequently, we cannot be surprised that she retorted, with a marked sneer,—"Lady Mary always dresses well!" This anecdote was recorded by Lady Mary in her private journal—apparently a curious repository of wit and scandal, which her daughter, Lady Bute, no doubt from very proper motives, thought proper to destroy; the loss of which, however, we cannot but regret.

The circumstance of Lady Mary being constantly invited to the private parties of George the First, had the effect of depriving her of the favour and admiration of his son. It has, indeed, ever been the peculiar characteristic of the heirs of the House of Hanover, so far to reverse the order of nature, as to deprecate the slightest respect shown to the author of their being; and, consequently, it was in the true spirit of this feeling, that when Lady Mary was known to be a favoured visitor at St. James's, she grew to be an object of distrust and dislike at Leicester House.

As regards, however, her admission to the select evening parties of George the First, the following anecdote, the substance of which was inserted in her lost journal, is deserving of repetition:—"She had on one evening a particular engagement that made her wish to be dismissed unusually early: she explained her reasons to the Duchess of Kendal, and the Duchess informed the King, who, after a few complimentary remonstrances, appeared to acquiesce. But when he saw her about to take her leave, he began battling the point afresh, declaring it was unfair and perfidious to cheat him in such a manner, and saying many other fine things, in spite of which she at last contrived to escape. At the foot of the great stairs she ran against Secretary Craggs* just coming in, who stopped her to inquire what was the matter? were the company put off? She told him why she went away, and how urgently the King had pressed her to stay longer; possibly dwelling on that head with some small complacency. Mr. Craggs made no remark; but when he had heard all, snatching her up in his arms as a nurse carries a child, he ran full speed with her up stairs, depositing her within the ante-chamber, kissed both her hands respectfully, (still not saying a word,) and vanished. The pages seeing her returned, they knew not how, hastily threw open the inner doors, and before she had recovered her breath, she found herself again in the King's presence. "*Ah! la revoilà!*" cried he and the Duchess, extremely pleased, and began thanking her for her obliging change of mind. She was bewildered, fluttered, and entirely off her guard; so beginning giddily with,—"Oh! Lord, Sir! I have been so frightened;"—she told his Majesty the whole story exactly as she would have told it to any one else. He had not done exclaiming, nor his Germans wondering, when again the door flew open, and the attendants announced Mr. Secretary Craggs, who, but that moment arrived, it should seem, entered with the usual obeisance, and as composed an air as if nothing had happened. "*Mais comment donc, Monsieur Craggs,*" said the King, going up to him, "*est-ce que c'est l'usage de ce pays de porter des belles dames comme un sac de froment?*"—"Is it the custom of this country to carry about fair ladies like a sack of wheat?" The minister, struck dumb by this unexpected attack, stood a minute or two, not knowing which way to look; then, recovering his self-possession, answered with a low bow,—"There is nothing I would not do for your Majesty's satisfaction." This was coming off tolerably well; but he did not forgive the tell-tale culprit, in whose ear, watching his opportunity when the King turned from them, he muttered a bitter reproach, with a round oath to enforce it;—'which I durst not resent,' continued she, 'for I had drawn it upon myself; and indeed I was heartily vexed at my own imprudence.'"*

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* James Craggs, the younger, who succeeded Addison as Secretary of State, was equally distinguished for his abilities as a statesman, for his handsome person, his ingratiating manners, and social pleasantry. His father, James Craggs the elder, had been footman to Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, and by the influence of that celebrated woman, as well as by his own strong sense and excellent conduct, rose to be Postmaster-General, and was enabled to amass an almost princely fortune. The younger Craggs died on the 16th of February, 1720, at the age of thirty-five, and about a month afterwards his father followed him to the grave. The former was buried in Westminster Abbey, where there is a monument to him, inscribed with the well-known epitaph of his friend Pope:—

"Statesman, yet friend to truth; of soul sincere,
In action faithful, and in honour clear:
Who broke no promise, served no private end,
Who gained no title, and who lost no friend;
Ennobled by himself,—by all approved,
Praised, wept, and honoured by the muse he loved!"

Alluding to the lowness of his origin, and to the circumstance of his dying before his father, Peter Leneve, the herald, proposed that his inscription should be,—"Here lies the last, who died before the first of his family." Both the Craggs are believed to have been deeply implicated in the memorable and infamous South-Sea bubble.

On the 5th of June, 1716, Mr. Wortley was appointed ambassador at Constantinople, whither Lady Mary, either from affection or curiosity, consented to accompany him. To the Princess of Wales she writes from Adrianople on the 1st of April, 1717; "I have now, Madam, finished a journey that has not been undertaken by any Christian since the time of the Greek Emperors; and I shall not regret all the fatigues I have suffered in it, if it gives me an opportunity of amusing your Royal Highness by an account of places utterly unknown amongst us; the Emperor's ambassadors, and those few English that have come hither, always going on the Danube to Nicopolis." She was not, indeed, as was formerly supposed, the first Englishwoman of rank who had visited the Levant; for it seems that Lady Paget and Lady Winchelsea had each previously accompanied her husband on their several embassies. Her inquiring disposition, however, and her ingratiating manners appear to have brought her into greater familiarity with the Turkish ladies, than has been achieved by any other of her countrywomen, either before or since. "The ladies of Constantinople," she said to Spence, "used to be extremely surprised to see me go always with my bosom uncovered. It was in vain that I told them that everybody did so among us; and alleged everything that I could in defence of it. They could never be reconciled to so immodest a custom, as they thought it; and one of them, after I had been defending it to my utmost, said,—'O, my sultana, you can never defend the manners of your country, even with all your wit; but I see you are in pain for them, and shall therefore press it no farther."

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* Lady M. W. Montagu's Works, vol. i. p. 38.

Nor was this the only occasion where the habits and manners of Lady Mary appear to have excited astonishment in the minds of the ladies of the East. "One of the greatest entertainments in Turkey," said Lady Mary to Spence, "is having you to their baths; and when I was introduced to one, the lady of the house came to undress me, which is another high compliment that they pay to strangers. After she had slipped off my gown, and saw my stays, she was very much struck at the sight of them, and cried out to the other ladies in the bath,—'Come hither, and see how cruelly the poor English ladies are used by their husbands; you need boast, indeed, of the superior liberties allowed you, when they lock you up thus in a box.'" Lady Mary, it need scarcely be remarked, relates the same anecdote in one of her charming letters, with some other less delicate circumstances.

Dring her absence in the East, several strange stories were circulated respecting Lady Mary in England, the truth or falsehood of which it is now difficult to ascertain. Among other eccentric adventures, it was believed by many that she conferred her favours on the Sultan, Achmed the Third. This story, whether truly or not, Lady Mary attributed to the invention of Pope. "The word malignity," she writes, some years afterwards, to Lady Pomfret, "and a passage in your letter, call to my mind the wicked wasp of Twickenham. His lies affect me now no more; they will be all as much despised as the story of the seraglio and the handkerchief, of which I am persuaded he was the only inventor. The man has a malignant and ungenerous heart; and he is base enough to assume the mask of a moralist, in order to decry human nature, and to give his vent to his hatred of man and womankind." It seems, indeed, (notwithstanding an opinion to the contrary has long been prevalent,) that Lady Mary never even obtained access to the interior of the Seraglio. There is certainly nothing in her letters to show that this extraordinary indulgence was ever awarded to her; and, in later times, when the wife of one of our ambassadors applied for a similar favour,—pleading the visit of Lady Mary as a well-known precedent,—the Turks pronounced the story to be as false as it was ridiculous.

One important result, consequent on the visit of Lady Mary to the East, was her being the means of introducing into this country the Oriental practice of inoculating for the small-pox. Posterity, at this distance of time, can scarcely comprehend the vast service which she thus performed in the cause of humanity. According to the "Plain Dealer" (No. XXX, July 3, 1724.) "It is a godlike delight that her reflection must be conscious of, when she considers to whom we owe, that many thousand British lives will be saved every year, to the use and comfort of their country, after a general establishment of this practice. A good, so lasting and so vast, that none of those wide endowments and deep foundations of public charity which have made most noise in the world, deserve at all to be compared with it." The more recent and more valuable discovery of vaccination, though it has superseded the boon which Lady Mary conferred on mankind, yet detracts in no degree from her personal merit, or her claims on the gratitude of her contemporaries. Indeed, when we remember the violent opposition which she had to encounter in her attempt to benefit mankind; the obloquy and ridicule which her new theory entailed upon her; the undaunted resolution with which she pursued her thankless task; as well as the extraordinary blessings which she ultimately conferred on humanity, words are insufficient to express our admiration of her noble and disinterested conduct.

In October, 1718, Lady Mary returned with her husband to England, and shortly afterwards we find her renewing her intercourse with the Court and the wits. Distinguished by high rank, and gifted with beauty and wit which have become historical, we cannot wonder that she grew to be the idol of that celebrated circle which numbered Gay, Swift, Pope, Parnell, Arbuthnot, and Garth among its brightest ornaments. At the suggestion of Pope, with whom she was as yet on good terms, she took a house at Twickenham, and it was either under her own roof, or at the residence of the poet, that in this, the most classical of English villages, the above-mentioned brilliant assemblage of talent was frequently associated.

The friendship, however, which existed between Lady Mary and Pope was destined to be of shorter duration, and of less celebrity than their subsequent quarrel, of which we have little to add beyond that which the reader is already acquainted with. Pope, as is well known, after having lived on terms of intimacy with Lady Mary for some years, and having on all occasions written and spoken of her rather as a goddess than a woman, suddenly changed his tone of panegyric into that of invective, and, under the names of Lady Mary and Sappho, stigmatized in the most unjustifiable manner her private habits and moral conduct. It is remarkable that, many years before Pope distinguished himself as a satirist, Addison should have put Lady Mary on her guard against the spiteful nature and latent satirical vein of the poet. "Leave him as soon as you can," was the advice of Addison; "he will certainly play you some devilish trick else: he has an appetite for satire."* Addison unquestionably alluded to the celebrated satire on himself, the unfinished sketch of which Pope is known to have sent him in MS.†

In regard to the immediate cause of quarrel between Pope and Lady Mary, the explanation which she herself gave to her relations, not only affords the best apology for Pope, but presents the easiest and most probable solution of a difficult question. Pope, she said, addressed to her a passionate declaration of love; the effect of which was so ludicrous that she burst into an immoderate fit of laughter, and from that moment the poet became her implacable enemy.

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* Spence's Anecdotes, p. 32.

† Addison and his friends, it would seem, had been in the habit of discussing Pope's character and genius in rather too free a manner, in the London coffee-houses and elsewhere: on which, says Pope, "I wrote a letter to Mr. Addison, to let him know that I was not unacquainted with this behaviour of his; that if I was to speak severely of him in return for it, it should not be in such a dirty way; and that I should rather tell himself freely of his faults, and allow his good qualities; and that it should be something in the following manner: I then adjoined the first sketch of what has since been called my satire on Addison. Mr. Addison used me very civilly ever after, and never did me any injustice that I know of from that time to his death, which was about three years after."—*Spence*, p. 10.

Such appears to have been the secret history of the quarrel between Lady Mary and Pope. The poet himself says, in the Epistle to Arbuthnot,—thus giving a pointed meaning to an otherwise unintelligible couplet,—

> "Yet soft by nature, more a dupe than wit,
> Sappho can tell you how this man was bit."

There is extant, moreover, a copy of verses addressed by Pope to Gay,—occasioned, it seems, by the latter congratulating him on the completion of his villa at Twickenham,—which goes far to prove that the poet had conceived a hopeless and unhappy attachment for Lady Mary;—

> "Ah! friend, 'tis love—this truth you lovers know—
> In vain my structures rise, my gardens grow;
> In vain fair Thames reflects the double scenes
> Of hanging mountains, and of sloping greens:
> Joy lives not here; to happier seats it flies,
> And only dwells where Wortley casts her eyes.
>
> What are the gay parterre, the chequered shade,
> The morning bower, the evening colonnade;
> But soft recesses of uneasy minds,
> To sigh unheard in, to the passing winds?
> So the struck deer in some sequestered part
> Lies down to die, the arrow at his heart;
> There, stretched unseen, in coverts hid from day,
> Bleeds drop by drop, and pants his life away."

Lady Mary, in transmitting these verses to her sister, Lady Mar, observes that she has thought proper to "stifle" them, and requests that they may go no further than her sister's closet. It is remarkable that Pope afterwards published the last eight lines only as a Fragment. Having quarrelled with the goddess of his idolatry, he was of course unwilling to publish a fulsome panegyric; which, while it might have afforded a triumph to her, must only have given a disagreeable publicity to his own weakness and unhappy love.

Under no circumstances is rejection by a woman a very palatable consummation of a pleasing delusion; but, in the present instance, the pain was enhanced by the constitutional and almost morbid sensibility of Pope, and by the cruel consciousness of his personal deformity. With such a man, and under such circumstances, the withering effect of Lady Mary's unfeeling and contemptuous laugh may be more easily imagined than described.

Lady Mary appears to have missed no single opportunity of vexing the irritable poet. In a letter to Arbuthnot,—which she was well aware would meet the eye of Pope,—she writes:—"I wish you would advise poor Pope to turn to some more honest livelihood than libelling. I know he will allege in his excuse that he must write to eat, and he is now grown sensible that nobody will buy his verses, except their curiosity is piqued to it, to see what is said of their acquaintance." Remarks of a similar malicious tendency, of which Lady Mary was the author, were constantly conveyed to Pope by his friends. Indeed, in her determination to be avenged on her maligner, she seems occasionally to have outstepped the bounds of truth, and to have invented one or two ingenious stories to Pope's discredit, which had the effect of cutting the poet to the quick. Among others, an account, which was published at the period, of Pope having been cudgelled by two gentlemen in Ham Walk, near Twickenham, has been attributed to Lady Mary; and so annoyed was Pope at the publicity obtained by the unfounded anecdote, that he drew up the following solemn refutation, which was inserted in the Daily Post of the 14th of June, 1718:—

"Whereas there has been a scandalous paper cried aloud about the streets, under the title of 'A Pop upon Pope,' insinuating that I was whipped in Ham Walk, on Thursday last:—This is to give notice, that I did not stir out of my house at Twickenham on that day; and the same is a malicious and ill-grounded report.—A. P."

According to Pope's sister, Mrs. Racket, the poet was but little susceptible of fear. Even after the publication of the Dunciad, when he was several times threatened with castigation by the persons whom he had satirized, he still continued his solitary ramblings in Ham Walk. He adopted, however, the precaution of taking with him a large Danish dog, named Bounce,* who was much attached to him, and of arming himself with pistols. "With pistols," he said, "the least man in England was above a match for the largest without."

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* When Bounce died, Pope had a notion of burying him in his garden, at Twickenham, and placing over him a piece of marble, with the inscription,—

"O Rare Bounce!"

In the summer of 1739, Lady Mary proceeded to the continent, with the express intention of remaining an exile for the remainder of her life. As she was unaccompanied by her husband, and, moreover, as during the twenty-one following years which preceded the death of Mr. Wortley, they never again appear to have met, we may presume that they separated, either on account of domestic differences, or from increasing feelings of mutual distaste.

Having, in the first instance, visited the classical scenes of Rome and Naples, Lady Mary hired a palace at Brescia, where, with the exception of

He thought it possible, however, that it might be construed into disrespect towards Ben Jonson's memory, and the project was consequently dropped. Bounce, it may be remarked, is the hero of Gay's "Epistle from Bounce to Fop, from a dog at Twickenham to a dog at Court." Bounce is there made to exclaim :—

"My eldest born resides not far,
Where shines great Strafford's glittering star;
My second (child of Fortune) waits
At Burlington's palladian gates;
A third majestically stalks
(Happiest of dogs) in Cobham's walks;
One ushers friends to Bathurst's door,
One fawns at Oxford's on the poor.
Nobles, whom arms or arts adorn,
Wait for my infants yet unborn;
None but a peer of wit and grace
Can hope a puppy of my race."

occasional visits to Genoa, Padua, and Florence, she continued chiefly to reside till her death. About a twelvemonth after she quitted England, Horace Walpole, who was occasionally thrown into her society at Florence, draws a curious picture of her appearance and habits, as she presented herself in her fifty-first year. In a letter, addressed to the Hon. H. S. Conway, dated 25th September, 1740, he writes,—"Did I tell you Lady Mary is here? She laughs at my Lady Walpole, scolds my Lady Pomfret, and is laughed at by the whole town. Her dress, her avarice, and her impudence, must amaze any one that never heard her name. She wears a foul mob, that does not cover her greasy black locks that hang loose, never combed or curled; an old mazarine-blue wrapper, that gapes open and discovers a canvass petticoat. Her face swelled violently on one side with the remains of a ——,* partly covered with a plaister, and partly with white paint, which for cheapness she has bought so coarse, that you would not use it to wash a chimney."

To those, whose imaginations have pictured Lady Mary Wortley Montagu in no other light than as the charming possessor of wit and beauty, the effect of the foregoing passage will have been somewhat startling. Walpole, however, in a letter to Richard West, dated a few days afterwards, again canvasses Lady Mary's failings, and with increased acrimony. After speaking of "a grave young man from Oxford," who, it appears, had rendered himself extremely popular with the Englishwomen residing at Florence, he proceeds;—"Lady Mary is so far gone, that to get him from the mouth of her antagonist [Lady Walpole], she literally took him out to dance country-dances last night at a formal ball, where there was no measure kept in laughing at her old, foul, tawdry, plastered personage. She played at faro two or three times, at Princess Crayon's, where she cheats horse and foot. She is really entertaining: I have been reading her works, which she lends out in manuscript, but they are too womanish."

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* It is needless, perhaps, to recal to the reader's memory the well-known couplet of Pope, in which there is the same indecent and scandalous allusion to the supposed effects of Lady Mary's frailty:—

> "From furious Sappho scarce a milder fate,
> ——'d by her love, or libell'd by her hate."
>
> *Imitations of Horace*, Book ii. Satire 1.

It is needless to remark, that Lady Mary's want of personal cleanliness is, on more than one occasion, severely satirized by Pope. In the Imitation of the First Epistle of the First Book of Horace we find:—

> "You laugh, half beau, half sloven if I stand,
> My wig all powder, and all snuff my band;
> You laugh, if coat and breeches strangely vary,
> White gloves, and linen, worthy Lady Mary;"

And again, in the "Essay on Women":—

> "Rufa, whose eye, quick glancing o'er the park,
> Attracts each light, gay meteor of a spark,

Agrees as ill with Rufa studying Locke,
As Sappho's diamonds with her dirty smock;
Or Sappho, at her toilet's greasy task,
With Sappho fragrant at an evening mask.
So morning insects, that in muck begun,
Shine, buzz, and fly-blow in the setting sun."

Pinkerton, in his amusing little work, the "Walpoliana," reports Horace Walpole to have said:—"Lady Wortley Montagu was a playfellow of mine when both were children. She was always a dirty little thing. This habit continued with her. When at Florence, the Grand Duke gave her apartments in his palace. One room sufficed for everything. When she went away, the stench was so strong that they were obliged to fumigate the chamber with vinegar for a week." Whatever credit is to be placed in the latter part of this passage, the assertion that Lady Mary and Horace Walpole were playfellows, is a ludicrous and unaccountable mistake. Walpole was born on the 5th of October, 1717, at least three years after Lady Mary had become a mother.

Of the conversational wit of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu but few specimens have been handed down to us; the following, however, will serve as an illustration. Lady Sundon,* mistress of the robes to Queen Caroline, and a great favourite with that princess, had been presented by Lord Pomfret with a magnificent pair of diamond ear-rings, valued at fourteen hundred pounds, as a bribe for having procured for him the appointment of master of the horse to the Queen. One day Lady Sundon happened to wear these suspicious jewels when on a visit to the old Duchess of Marlborough: when she had gone,—"What an impudent creature that is," said the Duchess, "to go about with her bribe in her ear!"—"Madam," replied Lady Mary, who was present, "how would you have people know where wine is sold, unless a sign is hung out to show them?"*

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* Wife of William Clayton, Lord Sundon. The influence of the Duchess of Marlborough procured her introduction to Queen Caroline, who subsequently conferred upon her the appointments of woman of the bed-chamber and mistress of the robes. The secret of her influence over the Queen—an influence of which even Sir Robert Walpole himself was jealous,—is known to have been a discovery which she made of the

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Queen being ruptured, an infirmity which her Majesty was morbidly anxious to conceal. Lady Sundon is accused on more than one occasion of having turned her court influence to pecuniary advantage. She once, in the enthusiasm of vanity and success, proposed to Sir Robert Walpole to unite their several interests, and govern the kingdom together. Sir Robert bowed and begged her patronage, but remarked that he thought no one fit to govern the kingdom but the King and Queen. Another anecdote is related of Lady Sundon by Horace Walpole. "One day Sir Robert was at dinner with Lady Sundon, who hated the Bishop of London, as much as she loved the Church: 'Well,' said she to Sir Robert, 'how does your Pope do?' —'Madam,' replied he, 'he is my Pope, and shall be my Pope; everybody has some Pope or other; don't you know that you are one? They call you Pope Joan.' She flew into a passion, and desired he would not fix any names on her; that they were not so easily got rid of."—*Horace Walpole's Letters*, vol. i. p. 126.

* Walpole's Letters, vol. i. p. 124. Walpole's Reminiscences, p. 71.

Apparently, we have been deprived of some of the wittiest of Lady Mary's letters in consequence of their discussing subjects, and recording anecdotes totally unfit for publication. Dr. Young, the author of the "Night Thoughts," is said, a short time before his death, to have destroyed a large number of her letters; alleging as his motive, that they were too indecent to meet the public eye.

During the last years of Lady Mary's life, she suffered constant annoyance and anxiety from the vices and follies of her only son, whose eccentricities were carried to the verge of insanity. Of this singular personage, a brief notice may perhaps be acceptable to the reader.

Edward Wortley Montagu was born at Wharncliffe-Lodge in Yorkshire, about the year 1714. Distinguished in his youth by an utter disregard of truth, and a dislike to wholesome control, his first exploit was to run away from Westminster School, and enter the service of a chimney-sweeper. From his long and unaccountable absence, his family had given him up as lost, when a gentleman happened to recognize his face in the streets, and succeeded in restoring him to his friends. Wedded, however, to a vagabond life, he contrived to elope a second time, and, on this occasion, engaged himself as an apprentice to the master of a fishing-smack. He subsequently shipped himself on board a vessel bound for Spain, and in that country served for some time as a muleteer: however, he was again discovered and brought back to his friends, by whom he was placed under the charge of a private tutor, and subsequently sent to travel on the continent.

But neither his restoration to civilized society, nor the watchful care of his tutor, had the slightest effect in giving stability to his character, or improving his mind. At one time we find him affecting to be a religious enthusiast; and at another, engaged in philosophical speculations. He made himself further conspicuous by contracting a very improvident marriage with a woman of low birth, whom he deserted in a few weeks; he was always in debt and in scrapes, and in whatever town abroad he took up his residence, he speedily made himself notorious by his eccentricities.

In the month of June, 1742, Lady Mary had an interview with her son at Valence, of which, in one of her letters to her husband, she gives the following interesting account:—"I am just returned from passing two days with our son, of whom I will give you the most exact account I am capable of. He is so much altered in person I should scarcely have known him. He has entirely lost his beauty, and looks at least seven years older than he did; and the wildness that he always had in his eyes is so much increased, it is downright shocking, and I am afraid will end fatally. He is grown fat, but he is still genteel, and has an air of politeness that is agreeable. He speaks French like a Frenchman, and has got all the fashionable expressions of that language, and a volubility of words which he always had, and which I do not wonder should pass for wit with inconsiderate people. His behaviour is perfectly civil, and I found him very submissive; but in the main, no way really improved in his understanding, which is exceedingly weak; and I am convinced he will always be led by the person he converses with, either right or wrong, not being capable of forming any fixed judgment of his own. As to his enthusiasm, if he had it, I suppose he has already lost it; since I could perceive no turn of it in all his conversation. But, with his head, I believe it is possible to make him a Monk one day, and a Turk three days after. He has a flattering, insinuating manner, which naturally prejudices strangers in his favour. He began to talk to me in the usual silly cant I have so often heard from him, which I shortened by telling him I desired not to be troubled with it; that professions were of no use where actions were expected; and that the only thing that could give me hopes of a good conduct was regularity and truth." Lady Mary concludes her letter:—"The rest of his conversation was extremely gay. The various things he has seen have given him a superficial universal knowledge. He really knows most of the modern languages; and if I could believe him, can read Arabic and has read the Bible in Hebrew. He said it was impossible for him to avoid going back to Paris; but he promised me to lie but one night there, and to go to a town six posts from thence, on the Flanders road, where he would wait your orders." It seems by a subsequent letter of Lady Mary, that Mr. Montagu, who was travelling under the assumed name of Mons. du Durand, had given her the "most solemn assurances" that no human being should know of their meeting at Valence. "Yet," she adds, "he rode straight to Montelimart, where he told at the assembly that he came into this country purely on my orders, and that I had stayed with him two days at Orange; talking much of my kindness to him, and insinuating that he had another name, much more considerable than that he appeared with."

About the end of 1747, Mr. Montagu obtained a seat in Parliament, as member for Huntingdon; and four years afterwards, we find him achieving increased notoriety by suffering imprisonment with Mr. Taaffe, another member of Parliament, in the Grand Chatelet at Paris,* on the charge of cheating and robbing a Jew. Horace Walpole writes to Sir Horace Mann, on the 22nd of November, 1751,—"All the letters from Paris have been very cautious of relating the circumstances. The outlines are, that these two *gentlemen*, who were faro-bankers to Madame de Mirepoix, had travelled to France to exercise the same profession, where it is supposed they cheated a Jew, who would afterwards have cheated them of the money he owed, and that, to secure payment, they broke open his lodgings and bureau, and seized jewels and other effects; that he accused them; that they were taken out of their beds at two o'clock in the morning; kept in different prisons, without fire or candle, for six-and-thirty hours; have since been released on excessive bail; are still to be tried; may be sent to the galleys or dismissed home, where they will be reduced to keep the best company; for I suppose nobody else will converse with them. Their separate anecdotes are curious: Wortley, you know, has been a perfect Gil Blas."

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* For Mr. Montagu's own account of this strange affair, see Nichols's Literary Anecdotes, vol. iv. p. 629.

Horace Walpole writes the same year to Sir Horace Mann,—"Our greatest miracle is Lady Mary Wortley's son, whose adventures have made so much noise. His parts are not proportionate, but his expense is incredible. His father scarce allows him anything, yet he plays, dresses, diamonds himself, and has more snuff-boxes than would suffice a Chinese idol with a hundred noses. But the most curious part of his dress, which he has brought from Paris, is an iron wig: you literally would not know it from hair: I believe it is on this account, that the Royal Society have just chosen him of their body." At a later period, Mr. Montagu fixed his abode in Egypt, where he resided several years. While in that country he adopted the dress and habits, and, apparently, the religion of the Turks; taking especial care to avail himself of the advantage of the plurality of wives, which is permitted by the Mahomedan code.

On the death of his father in 1761, Mr. Montagu could scarcely be astonished at finding himself disinherited. The family estate, which should properly have descended to him, was bequeathed to the children of his sister, Lady Bute, with the especial proviso, however, that should he leave an heir born in marriage, the estate should return to that child. For fifteen years Mr. Montagu appears to have quietly succumbed to the will of the departed. A short time, however, before his own decease, being then resident at Venice, he caused (through the medium, it is said, of his friend Romney, the painter) the following extraordinary advertisement to be inserted in the "Public Advertiser" of the 16th of April, 1776 :—

"A gentleman who has filled two successive seats in Parliament ; is nearly sixty years of age ; lives in great splendour and hospitality ; and from whom a considerable estate must pass if he dies without issue ; hath no objection to marry a widow or single lady, provided the party be of genteel birth, polite manners, and is five or six months gone in her pregnancy. Letters directed to — Brecknock, Esq. at Will's Coffee-house, will be honoured with due attention, secrecy, and every mark of respect."

In London, as in all great cities, money will purchase anything, and a rich man has only to make known his wishes, to have them gratified. Lord Wharncliffe, Mr. Montagu's great-nephew, informs us,—"It has always been believed in the family that this advertisement was successful, and that a woman, having the qualifications required by it, was actually sent to Paris, to meet Mr. E. Wortley, who got so far as Lyons, on his way thither: there, however, while eating a beccafico for supper, a bone stuck in his throat, and occasioned his death." Before closing our notices of Mr. Edward Wortley Montagu, it may be remarked that he united the character of an author to his other eccentricities. In addition to some "Observations on the Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire," in which his tutor was thought to have had the principal share, he was unquestionably the writer of some "Observations on Earthquakes," as well as an account of the "Written Mountains in Arabia," which were published in the Philosophical Transactions.

Of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu but little remains to be said. After an absence from her native country of twenty-two years, she returned to England, on the death of her husband,* and had the satisfaction to find that her literary reputation had not faded, and that she was still an object of curiosity to the world. Horace Walpole writes to George Montagu, on the 2nd of February, 1762,—"Lady Mary Wortley is arrived; I have seen her: I think her avarice, her dirt, and her vivacity, are all increased. Her dress, like her languages, is a galimatias of several countries; the ground-work rags, and the embroidery, nastiness. She needs no cap, no handkerchief, no gown, no petticoat, no shoes. An old black-laced hood represents the first; the fur of a horseman's coat, which replaces the third, serves for the second; a dimity petticoat is deputy, and officiates for the fourth; and slippers act the part of the last."* Her family inform us that she had acquired foreign tastes and foreign habits, and consequently the exchange from the gloomy magnificence of an Italian palace, to a small, three-storied house, in the neighbourhood of Hanover-square, appears to have been almost as striking as it was inconvenient. "I am most handsomely lodged," she said, "for I have two very decent closets, and a cupboard on each floor."

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* Horace Walpole writes to George Montagu on the 7th of February, 1761,—"Have you heard what immense riches old Wortley has left? One million three hundred and fifty-thousand pounds! It is all to centre in my Lady Bute; her husband is one of Fortune's prodigies." *Walpole's Letters*, vol. iv. p. 140. Gray also writes about the same period,—"You see old Wortley Montagu is dead at last, at eighty-three. It was not mere avarice, and its companion abstinence, that kept him alive so long. He every day drank, I think it was, half a pint of tokay, which he imported himself from Hungary in greater quantity than he could use, and sold the overplus for any price he chose to set upon it. He has left better than half a million of money." *Gray's Works*, vol. iii. p. 272.

Lady Mary survived her return to England only ten months. She had for some time been afflicted with a cancer in the breast, the ravages of which terminated her life on the 21st of August, 1762, in the seventy-third year of her age.

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* Walpole's Letters, vol. iv. p. 203.

MARY BELLENDEN.

Daughter of the second Lord Bellenden.—At an early age appointed Maid of Honour to the Princess of Wales.—Her great vivacity and wit.—Horace Walpole's description of her. —Extract from Gay's "Welcome to Pope."—George the Second's admiration of her.—Anecdotes.—Her private marriage in 1720 to Colonel Campbell, afterwards Duke of Argyle.—Specimen of her epistolary style from the Suffolk Correspondence.—Period of her death.—Enumeration of her family.

THIS lively and beautiful woman was a daughter of John, second Lord Bellenden, by Mary, daughter of Henry Moore, first Earl of Drogheda, and widow of William Ramsay, third Earl of Dalhousie. At an early age she was appointed a Maid of Honour to Queen Caroline, then Princess of Wales, at whose Court, with the single exception of her beautiful friend, Mary Lepel, there was no one who rivalled her in wit, and few who approached her in loveliness. The names of the two friends are frequently associated together. Gay says, in his ballad of "Damon and Cupid:"

> "So well I'm known at Court,
> None ask where Cupid dwells;
> But readily resort,
> To Bellenden's or Lepel's."

Horace Walpole speaks of Miss Bellenden, as having been "exquisitely beautiful"; and, in noticing various persons connected with the Court of George the First, he observes,—"Above all, for universal admiration, was Miss Bellenden. Her face and person were charming; lively she was almost to *étourderie,* and so agreeable was she, that I never heard her mentioned afterwards by one of her contemporaries, who did not prefer her as the most perfect creature they ever knew." Gay in his "Welcome to Pope from Greece," commemorates her with her sister Margaret:

> "Madge Bellenden, the tallest of the land,
> And smiling Mary, soft and fair as down."

And as regards her character for liveliness, we find in a ballad of the period:

> "But Bellenden we needs must praise,
> Who, as down stairs she jumps,
> Sings 'over the hills and far away',
> Despising doleful dumps."

George the Second, when Prince of Wales, is said to have entertained a stronger passion for Miss Bellenden, than he had been known to feel for any other woman except his own wife. "Miss Bellenden," says Walpole, "by no means felt a reciprocal passion. The Prince's gallantry was by no means delicate; and his avarice disgusted her. One evening, sitting by her, he took out his purse, and counted his money. He repeated the numeration: the giddy Bellenden lost her patience, and cried out,

—'Sir, I cannot bear it: if you count your money any more, I will go out of the room:' the chink of the gold did not tempt her more than the person of his Royal Highness."

On another occasion, when the Prince was counting his money in her presence, her feelings of disgust are said so entirely to have mastered her respect for royalty, that, by a sudden motion, either of her foot, or hand, she scattered his guineas about the floor, and contrived to escape from the apartment while he was eagerly employed in picking them up. Nor are these the only evidences of the slighting manner in which she treated her royal lover. In one of her letters to Mrs. Howard, speaking of the recent introduction of a new maid of honour at Court, she says: "I hope you will put her a little in the way of behaving before the Princess, such as not turning her back: and one thing runs mightily in my head, which is, crossing her arms, as *I did to the Prince*, and told him I was not cold, but I liked to stand so."*

At the period when Miss Bellenden was subjected to the addresses of the Prince, her heart was engaged to another. This circumstance was subsequently discovered by the Prince, who, however, with much generosity of feeling, assured her that if she would promise not to marry without his knowledge he would not only consent to the match, but would extend his regard to her husband. Miss Bellenden gave the required promise, but without discovering the name of her lover. It seems, however, that she subsequently repented of the pledge, and fearing lest the Prince should throw some insurmountable obstacle in the way of her marriage, privately gave her hand to Colonel John Campbell, afterwards fourth Duke of Argyle, to whom she was married in 1720.

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* Suffolk Correspondence, vol. i. p. 62.

The Prince was naturally provoked and annoyed at this implied suspicion of his good faith; so much so, that whenever Mrs. Campbell entered the drawing-room at Leicester House, it was his custom to step up to her and whisper some unpleasant reproach in her ear. His anger, however, was certainly not extended towards her husband. He not only retained him in his post of groom of the bed-chamber, but continued him in the appointment on his own accession to the throne.

A few of Mrs. Campbell's letters have recently been published among the Suffolk Correspondence; but, in regard to the wit which might have been expected from the character of the writer, they are even more disappointing than those of her beautiful friend, Mary Lepel. Of these letters, the following one, though somewhat tainted by the indelicacy of the age, affords the liveliest, and, unquestionably, the most characteristic specimen:—

To Mrs. Howard.

"Bath, 1720.

"O Gad, I am so sick of bills, for my part I believe I shall never be able to hear them mentioned without casting up my accounts:—bills are *accounts*, you know. I do not know how your bills go in London, but I am sure mine are not dropped, for I have paid one this morning as long as my arm, and as broad as my ——. I intend to send you a letter of attorney, to enable you to dispose of my goods before I can leave this place—such is my condition. I was in hopes to have found the good effects of your present; but I have found nothing to brag of but your goodness, which is always more than my desert. I am just a-going to the King's garden—I wish to God it belonged to my Lord Mayor, as the saying is. Pray give my duty to my *grandmother*, and tell her I love her, and wish her the desert of the good, and prosperity of the wicked. My dear Howard, God bless you, and send health and liberty. Don't show this, I charge you, at your peril."

Of Mrs. Campbell, from the period of her marriage, we know little but that she maintained her character for good sense and unspotted virtue. Of the date of her decease also we have no record, but it would seem that her existence was scarcely prolonged beyond middle age. By Colonel Campbell, she was the mother of five children:—John, fifth Duke of Argyle;

Henry, killed at the battle of La Feldt; William, who represented the county of Argyle, and who was a captain in the navy; Frederick, member for Rutherglen, and a councillor at law; and Caroline, who married, first, Charles Bruce, Earl of Aylesbury, and afterwards the Hon. Henry Seymour Conway, the relation and correspondent of Horace Walpole.

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